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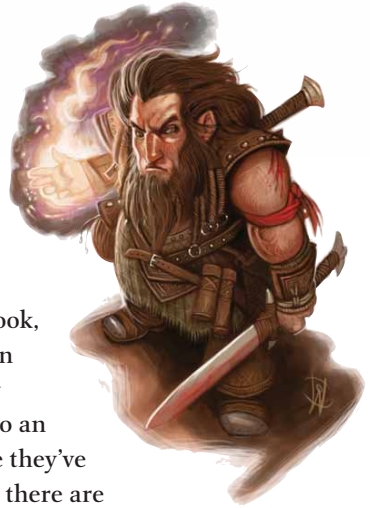

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DUNGEON December 2008

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Battle in Seattle

In the spirit of this month's Dragon *editorial, in which I ask readers to tell me their favorite supplements of all time, I proposed doing something similar in* Dungeon *with adventures. Plus, what better way to ponder gifts for the gamers on your holiday shopping list than think about your—and their—all-time favorites?*

But when I brought up the editorial topic with Bart, it kicked off a heated debate. Okay, it wasn't all that heated. I mean, we live in Seattle. Most debates around here aren't heated. It's too wet and gray. What's the point? Anyway, it got about as heated as an argument between two damp Seattlites can get, which is something like this:

Me: "I think that in the spirit of the *Dragon* editorial, I'd like to talk about my favorite published adventure of all time. Then I'd like to ask the fans to send in their favorite adventures.

Bart: "Uh huh."

Me: "Since we're also releasing 'Touch of Madness,' which is an updated 3E adventure, it would be cool to see what other adventure folks would want to see an update or spin-off of, especially if they're old *Dungeon* adventures."

Bart: "Oh, no question. *Tomb of Horrors*. That's everyone's favorite. Dumbass."

Me: "Hey, no need for the name calling. That's just mean. Are you sure?"

Bart: "Of course I'm sure. Everyone knows *Tomb of Horrors* would win. I'd put money on it."

Me: "What about *Against the Giants*? Or *Vault of the Drow*? Or any of the *Temples of Elemental Evil*? People love those. I think #1 would be *Against the Giants*."

Bart: "Alas, you're so stupid. And ugly. And did I mention stupid? *Tomb of Horrors* for the win."

Me: "Whatever. Jerk. And I'll take your bet. They usual?"

Bart: "Your dollar is as good as mine."

And that's about where it ended. Okay, okay—I may have taken some liberties with the dialog. Bart may not be that much of an ass ("may" being the operative word). And we're clearly big spenders here on the staff of *D&D Insider*. But you get the idea.

"Touch of Madness" was conceived over a year ago as a 4th Edition adventure, before we really knew what 4th Edition adventures would look like. We had broad ideas (bigger encounter areas, more varied monsters, and we knew they'd be easier to run), but that's it. Rob then reverse engineered it to be a 3E adventure, *then* updated it to 4th Edition. Confusing, I know.

In any event, I'm happy with the result, as well as with the culmination of the heroic tier of Scales of War. "The Temple Between" is pretty crazy, and we finally pull back the curtain on one of the major villains of the campaign in this one. Only one more week and it'll be available.

But until then, solve our debate. Let us know which published adventure from previous editions is your favorite of all time. If your favorite is a *Dungeon* adventure, all the better. In fact, if you have a favorite print and a favorite *Dungeon* adventure, vote below or send in your favorite to dndinsider@wizards.com. We'd love to hear from you! And I'd love it if you can make me a dollar richer ... and make Bart eat his words. Not that I'm trying to skew the results...

HEROIC
1–10

"Our eyes are open,
our fists are closed.
Our walls are stone,
our shields are steel.
Our faces are many,
our soul is dwarf.
And thus is there no
foe against whom
Overlook cannot
stand."

It is an ancient Overlook proverb—some would even call it a prayer—and it's about to be put to the ultimate test.

by Ari Marmell

illustrations by Michael Komarck, Rob Alexander and William O'Connor

✦

cartography by Mike Schley

SCALES OF WAR™

An adventure for 9th-level characters

THE TEMPLE BETWEEN

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The western end of Elsir Vale has been greatly troubled in recent days. The threat of the orc hordes from beyond the Stonehome Mountains, though turned back at Bordrin's Watch, still lingers in the people's minds. Peculiar and hostile creatures of shadow lurk in the caverns and caves below. Political squabbling grows among the city's powerful dwarf clans.

All this makes the city particularly vulnerable to an enemy nobody saw coming—that nobody even imagined. This enemy has goals and objectives far beyond the ultimately unimportant Elsir Vale, but the first step is the utter subjugation of Overlook.

An enemy who, at least in part, is already here.

"The Temple Between" is an adventure for 9th-level characters, and it is challenging enough to take them to 11th level by the time all is said and done. Although intended as the final chapter of the heroic tier portion of the Scales of War Adventure Path, it can be run as a standalone adventure, or as an adventure in a campaign of your own making, with a small degree of modification. It contains elements of urban investigation, dungeon delving, and even wartime conflict, making it a suitable adventure to players of many tastes and preferences.

BACKGROUND

Few today are aware of it, but the western regions of Elsir Vale have long been rich in planar magic. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the giants, soldiers, and servants of the primordials once dwelt nearby in large numbers, driving their dwarf slaves to great works. Whatever the cause, the region is run through with "cracks" in reality—portals that lead to other worlds. In the course of the Adventure Path, the PCs have already discovered one, traveling to the Shadowfell through the caverns beneath the Happy Beggar poorhouse. What they do not yet know—though they might discover it soon enough—is that a gateway to the Astral Sea waits in a great cathedral beneath the Stonehome Mountains, and a doorway to the Feywild lies hidden where the Elsir River flows from the mountains. (The region might well also contain a portal to the Elemental Chaos, but if so, it does not influence this adventure.)

No, the humans and elves and dwarves of Elsir Vale know nothing about this, but not everyone is so ignorant. A few sages know. A few priests know.

And the githyanki know.

Indeed, at the behest of their leaders in the astral city of Tu'narath, they have caused much of Elsir's worries of late. They arranged the theft of the platinum sword from Brindol, and they employed the shadar-kai, not only as weapons suppliers but to encourage the orcs of the west to rise. For the githyanki want Elsir Vale, badly, and particularly the planar portals it contains. Using it as a beachhead, they could easily launch an incursion, not merely into the mortal realm, but other worlds besides. And there is no reality, no plane of existence, on which the githyanki do not have *some* design or other.

The semi-disgraced General Zithiruun is in charge of this operation, or at least commands the forces seeking to carry it out. Forced to make use of mercenaries and lesser soldiers, to keep the githyanki involvement secret, he has carefully set up his pawns, maneuvering and manipulating, and now the time draws near to take Overlook by force.

Unknown to Zithiruun, and even to his commanding officers, they themselves are merely pawns

WHAT IS AN ADVENTURE PATH?

Scales of War is the fourth Adventure Path to appear in the pages of *Dungeon® Magazine*. But what, you ask, is an Adventure Path? Quite simply, it is a series of related adventures intended to form a complete D&D campaign that takes your players from 1st level all the way to, in the case of Scales of War, 30th level.

Previous Adventure Paths, presented with the 3rd Edition D&D® rules, took characters from 1st to 20th level. But with all three tiers in the new edition ripe and ready to explore, we're pushing the limit with Scales of War. Each tier takes roughly six adventures to traverse, which means we'll finish off this Adventure Path in about eighteen issues. Each adventure advances characters from between one and a half to two levels of experience. We recognize that not everyone will meet every encounter or complete every quest, however, so periodically, we'll point you to a supplemental Side Trek or short adventure to keep your PCs on pace. Plus, roughly every few months, *Dragon®* will feature new support content for Scales of War.

Finally, this Adventure Path is intended to function as a complete D&D campaign. That means we'll be making assumptions about the history of the world as we move along, just as you would in any campaign you run. We'll be borrowing heavily from the D&D mythology of 4th Edition, as well as all the great ideas that have cropped up in other products over the years—including the pages of past issues of *Dungeon*!

Enjoy your stay in Scales of War, and keep an eye out for next month's installment.

on a larger board; schemes far more devious than a simple githyanki invasion are afoot. But this is a discovery, and a challenge, for a future adventure. For now, the PCs have more than enough on their plates as it is.

The Mountainroot Temple

A subterranean structure built by the same order that would later go on to construct the Monastery of the Sundered Chain, the Mountainroot Temple stands deep beneath the Stonehome Mountains. Built when the dwarves were still celebrating their freedom from the giants, it was not a dwarven structure, but a temple built for *anyone* who wanted to pay tribute to Moradin, of any race. It held great reliquaries of holy icons, enormous cathedrals where hundreds could worship at once, and even a doorway to the Astral Plane whence angels and exarchs of Moradin would appear to discourse with the god's most favored priests and champions. To facilitate a grand community of Moradin worshipers, the Mountainroot Temple had, in addition to its astral doors and its main entryway into the mountains, four mystical doorways constructed. Each linked to another temple of Moradin elsewhere in the world, so the faithful could come and go with ease.

And for decades, even centuries, the temple thrived. Slowly, however, relations between Moradin's faithful grew strained. Priests assigned to other, "lesser" temples grew envious of those at Mountainroot. Many of the dwarf faithful grew haughty, considering themselves Moradin's "true" children, and sought to oust all others, or at least put them in lesser places, denying them access to the temple's wonders.

Was it Moradin's wrath? A curse brought upon them by the giants they'd so long ago escaped? Or simply a natural catastrophe without greater meaning? None can say. Whatever the case, some centuries ago, the mountain was struck by an earthquake. Portions of the inner tunnels collapsed, damaging several chambers of the Mountainroot Temple, destroying others entirely. Panicked, the priests and the faithful grabbed up their treasures and holy icons—at least most of them—and fled using the surviving magical portals.

Once they'd settled elsewhere, the bulk of Moradin's priests decided that this way was better. By scattering from the temple, they would allow the dwarves to build their own shrines, without feeling constrained by the other races, and the jealousy that marred the priesthood would fade. Although they mourned the loss of the great cathedral, and those few treasures they'd been unable to save, they declared the quake to have been Moradin's will and left the temple abandoned. In time, most faithful, even most priests save those most thoroughly learned in their history, forgot it had ever been.

Most, but not all. After a few decades, a small group of Moradin worshipers—mostly dwarves, but with members of other races as well—returned to the Mountainroot Temple. They cleaned it up as best they could and vowed to maintain it until it should some day become important once again. The most powerful of their number took on the title of Caretaker and lived within the temple, in a small structure built inside the larger reliquary. The Caretaker carefully attuned himself to the temple's surviving magic, allowing him to control the constructs and divine defenses and traps that protected the structure from outside invasion.

Zithiruun's Plan

And so it remained, until the githyanki learned of the temple and decided controlling it would better enable them to control Overlook, and by extension, Elsir Vale.

Zithiruun's plan is to take Overlook by simultaneously attacking from without and from within. Already he has a force of mercenary soldiers hiding in the wilds, ready to march on the city. Now, he's working to gain full control of the Mountainroot Temple—and the Stone Anvil, its anchor in Overlook—through which he can move a second force from the Astral Sea into the city's undefended heart.

To that end, Zithiruun has suborned a number of Overlook's priests and military officers. Most of them, including several priests and Watch Captain Aerun, were kidnapped and subject to a difficult psychic ritual cast by incredibly powerful githyanki. The result is that these poor people's minds were destroyed, and they have been possessed by several githyanki, who are even capable of manifesting some of their normal powers (albeit in weakened form).

Unfortunately, the possessing githyanki cannot access anything more than the victim's base personality; they have no access to specific memories. So High Priest Durkik of the Stone Anvil has *not* been possessed. Rather, he is being held captive and tortured for information, while a hired doppelganger takes his place in public, holding the Stone Anvil in readiness for Zithiruun's forces.

All of which would have gone undetected, if not for the alertness and curiosity of an old woman named Haelyn . . .

The Quests

"The Temple Between" offers PCs several opportunities to earn quest XP. Provided here is a list of quests, and their rewards, in the adventure.

Minor Quest—Learn Haelyn's Fate
As requested by the priest Lavinya, the PCs must investigate the shrine of Erathis, and Grovald, its new caretaker, to learn what happened to the kindly old woman who once attended it.

Reward: 400 XP.

Major Quest—Recover the *Incunabulum Primeval*
This ancient religious text, dating back to the dwarf rebellion against the giants, exists somewhere within the depths of the Mountainroot Temple. Durkik wants it returned before their enemies can get their hands on it. (It's currently on the hag Hethralga, in area M8 of the Mountainroot Temple.)

Reward: 2,000 XP (and 3,600 gp—the equivalent of three 9th-level treasure parcels—as promised by the priests of Moradin).

Major Quest—Prevent the Fall of Overlook
Once his scheme is prematurely cut short, General Zithiruun decides to take the city with what forces he already has available. Although Overlook is hardly a population of weaklings, they do require the PCs' aid.

Reward: Up to 2,500 XP, depending on Victory Point totals; see page 37 (and up to 7,000 gp—the equivalent of four 10th-level treasure parcels—as promised by the Council of Elders).

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs have just completed an adventure of obvious importance (the freeing of Amyria from her imprisonment in the form of a platinum sword, if they're playing through the Adventure Path). It appears as though nothing of consequence immediately follows—at least until the next night, when the PCs, through one of various means, receive hints that all is not well back in Overlook.

Returning to their home away from home, the heroes initially find nothing amiss. Slowly, however, they discover—through the prodding of Lavinya, priestess of Erathis, if not on their own—that several of the city's priests are acting peculiarly and, perhaps more importantly, Haelyn, keeper of Erathis's shrine, has vanished. Following up on these minor discrepancies, the PCs swiftly find hints leading to a conspiracy worming its way into the city's hierarchy. Several of the conspiracy's members are possessed (though the PCs do not learn by whom), while others—including High Priest Durkik Forgeheart of the Stone Anvil—have been replaced by doppelganger mercenaries. The PCs trace the conspirators back to their headquarters in a large warehouse, where they have the opportunity to rescue the real Durkik.

The PCs then learn of the Mountainroot Temple and find out that one of its mystical portals is located in a hidden sepulcher beneath the Stone Anvil. Using it, the PCs go to the abandoned ancient temple, where they must confront both a cadre of fey and a band of mercenaries employed by General Zithiruun. They also find, unfortunately, that they cannot leave! Here, assuming the PCs defeat their various foes, they make the following discoveries:

- The Caretaker of the temple is currently being tortured, and the pain and madness inflicted upon him have thrown the temple's defenses into chaos. This is why, among other things, nobody can leave.
- The fey are seeking an ancient tome of great power. They were sent by Cachlain, the Stone-Skinned King, a fomorian noble who—along with his new advisor, Sovacles—will play an important role in future installments of the Scales of War.
- The mercenaries serve someone called General Zithiruun, who seeks the temple—and indeed, the entire region!—for access to the various planar portals. The conspiracy in Overlook was only the first step, and the city will soon be facing a full-scale military invasion!

Finally, once the Caretaker allows them to leave, the PCs must return to the Council of Elders with a warning of the forthcoming siege. Here, the PCs can finally cement their place as heroes to this military city, as their help proves instrumental in Overlook's survival—and as they finally come face to face with General Zithiruun, and learn of the githyanki involvement in all that has come before.

Preparing for Adventure

"The Temple Between" allows the PCs a variety of opportunities to shine, from investigation to exploration, and from skill challenges to a variety of combat situations. They face a diversity of foes and must figure out the right questions to ask the right people. As such, it's important that you, as DM, have at least a reasonable level of familiarity with the events herein. It's best if you can read through the entire adventure beforehand, but if you're in a hurry, you should at least review each specific section, and its related encounters, before play. (The adventure is divided into three chapters, making a piecemeal approach feasible, if not the most recommended.)

Skill Challenges and Experience Points

This adventure makes use of a number of skill challenges—in particular, offering several opportunities for the PCs to interrogate prisoners or survivors of their various combats. It's important for you, as DM, to give XP only for those skill challenges that are meaningful, without allowing unnecessary repetition.

Here's what we mean, by way of example. In the Shrine of Erathis, the PCs have the opportunity to interrogate Grovald, as well as a number of his soldiers, both human and doppelganger. Because the PCs receive different information from Grovald than from his soldiers, they can receive XP for both skill challenges—one for Grovald, one for any of the soldiers. Once they have successfully interrogated a soldier, however, they should *not* receive XP for interrogating any other soldiers at the same location, because they all offer the same information. Similarly, because all the fey in the Mountain Root temple give the same information, and all the soldiers of the githyanki give the same information, the PCs can gain XP for only two interrogations—one fey, one other—in that area.

What You Need to Play

This adventure includes the encounters the PCs face as they explore and adventure in the area. It also provides tactical maps and more for the adventure. If you and your players haven't read through the Dungeons & Dragons *4th Edition* rules yet, that is your first best step so that you make certain you understand the rules. Also as mentioned above, read through at least the first of the adventure's three "chapters" before starting. This review enables you to become familiar with the material and the style of presentation. You might also want to take a look at the sections below regarding the adventure format.

Using Tactical Encounters

Each encounter includes several common elements, as described below.

Encounter Level

Each tactical encounter assumes a group of five player characters. An encounter of average difficulty is one where the encounter level is equal to the level of the party. Encounters that are 1 or 2 levels lower than the party are easy encounters, while encounters that are 2 or more levels higher than the party are difficult encounters.

For overcoming an encounter, a group earns the XP value noted beside the encounter level. This amount should be divided by the number of group members, and an equal amount should be awarded to each character.

Adapting the Adventure

"The Temple Between" is designed with five players in mind. You can easily adapt the adventure for larger groups easily by adding more treasure and inserting a few extra monsters using the guidelines presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. When adapting the adventure for larger groups, keep it simple. Where possible, just add one monster whose level equals the encounter level for each additional PC. Otherwise, look for appropriate monsters from this adventure (see the Appendix, in particular) and the *Monster Manual* to help stiffen up the resistance.

This adventure is also designed for 9th-level characters. As written, a slightly larger group of 8th-level characters can play through the adventure, but be sure to give the characters plenty of chances to take extended rests so that they can have a fair shot at surviving the expedition. For higher-level groups, adapting the adventure takes a bit more work. You need to add monsters and increase the treasure rewards to amounts appropriate for the characters. In all, adjusting the adventure is not too arduous, and with a little work, you can run this scenario for groups of three to eight players, and for characters of 8th through 13th level.

Setup

This section of a tactical encounter provides you with the basic parameters of the encounter. First, it provides context or background information for the encounter. Next, it provides a key to the monsters in the encounter so you can locate them on the tactical map. The map of each encounter area indicates where the monsters are located when the encounter begins. The setup section also describes what monsters are doing and how they react when the PCs arrive.

Several encounters include monsters that are either hidden, or do not appear until later in combat. In these instances, do not place those monsters on the map unless at least one PC has succeeded on the Perception check to notice them, or when they enter combat.

Read-Aloud Text

Read aloud text provides information about what the characters can see and are aware of. You do not have to read it word for word; feel free to paraphrase and use your own words when describing this information. Use read aloud text wisely; they are written for the most common approach to a particular situation and what your player characters do might require you to alter the information in any number of ways.

Monster Statistics

Encounters include stat blocks for each monster type present in the encounter. If more than one monster of a particular kind is present, the stat block indicates how many creatures can be found.

Treasure Parcels

Parcel A: _____ C-4 (the Shrine of Erathis).
Parcel B: _____ C-9 (the Warehouse).
Parcel C: _____ M-5 (the Vault).
Parcel D: _____ M-5 (the Vault).
Parcel E: _____ M-5 (the Vault).
Parcel F: _____ M-6 (the Grand Cathedral, on the persons of the spitting trolls and/or the two-headed troll).
Parcel G: _____ M-8 (the Lesser Sanctum, on the persons of Hethralga and/or the cyclopses).
Parcel H: _____ M-9 (the Reliquary).
Parcel I: _____ M-9 (the Reliquary).
Parcel J: _____ M-9 (the Reliquary).
Parcel K: _____ M-10 (the Underchambers).
Parcel L: _____ T-2 (Death from Above, on the person of the berbalang).
Parcel M: _____ T-5 (the Final Encounter, on the person of Zithiruun).

Based on the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the following parcels can go in the spaces above. Rely on the wish lists your players gave you for the first eight parcels.

Parcel 1: Magic item, level 14.
Parcel 2: Magic item, level 13.
Parcel 3: Magic item, level 13.
Parcel 4: Magic item, level 12.
Parcel 5: Magic item, level 12.
Parcel 6: Magic item, level 11.
Parcel 7: Magic item, level 11.
Parcel 8: Magic item, level 10.
Parcel 9: A gold statuette of a female dwarf blacksmith at work at the forge, worth 1,500 gp; and a sapphire worth 1,000 gp.
Parcel 10: A small ruby carefully chiseled into the shape of a burning flame, worth 1,500 gp; 800 gp; and 2 potions of healing.
Parcel 11: A small pouch containing 4 polished stones of alexandrite, worth 500 gp each (2,000 gp total); and 100 gp.
Parcel 12: A silver hammer (useless as a tool or weapon) worth 250 gp; and 3 potions of healing.
Parcel 13: A small gold-framed portrait of an old priest, worth 400 gp; and two potions of healing.

Tactics

This entry describes special actions the monsters take to defeat the adventurers. Sometimes this means the monsters take advantage of special features of the area or make use of special powers or equipment.

Map

Each encounter includes a map keyed with the initial locations of each monster. The map also indicates the location of any special features of the area.

Features of the Area

This section describes special features noted on the map. If the location has items or areas of interest with which the characters can interact, those features are described here. Look here to see if a door is out of the ordinary, if an altar has a secret compartment, or the like.

Treasure Preparation

As with previous installments of the Scales of War campaign, "The Temple Between" makes use of the parcel system of treasure rewards as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The characters should accumulate seventeen parcels by the end of the adventure. Of these, they should gain the reward for completing the quests (four parcels for 1,000 gp), and then whatever treasures they find along the way (the remaining thirteen). You can supply these treasures in whatever way you wish, but the Treasure Parcels sidebar presents the most likely rooms to bear treasure. During your preparation, assign parcels from those that follow to the rooms in the spaces provided. Use the players' wish lists to come up with magic items for the first eight parcels. (Consider saving at least one or two of the highest level magic items for later in the adventure, after the PCs have obtained 10th level.)

Starting the Adventure

As noted in the previous adventure, Amyria requests that the PCs accompany her to Overlook as they leave the fortress. If they choose not to go with her, she goes by herself. If they do travel with her, she fares them well once they reach the entrance to the city, and then she slips into the crowd around the entrance. PCs can choose to attempt to follow her at this point, and if so, they find that she heads to the Temple of Ioun in the Nine Bells district, where she prays.

Alternate Hooks

If you're running this adventure on its own or as part of your own campaign, rather than as part of the Scales of War—or if you prefer a different means of starting things off—one of these hooks might work better for you.

The Message

One night, as the party beds down to camp, a PC abruptly hears a voice in his head. A DC 10 Arcana check identifies it as the result of the Sending ritual.

"My name is Lavinya. I believe a hidden danger is growing within Overlook. Please come to Erathis's old temple as soon as you're able."

It's a cryptic message, yes, but that's the problem with Sending. The PCs might wonder how a woman they've never met can send them a Sending at all. If they ask her later on, Lavinya tells them that she was in one of the crowds that greeted them after their heroic triumph against the orc hordes in "The Siege of Bordrin's Watch" (or some other adventure in your own campaign).

No Place Like Home

It's entirely possible that the PCs have taken to thinking of Overlook as their home—or at least a base of operations—by this point in the Adventure Path. If they appear inclined to return to Overlook on their own, without any outside encouragement, allow them to do so. They can arrive at the city without any inkling that something is amiss, and remain that way until they either visit the shrine of Erathis or the Stone Anvil, or until they receive Lavinya's message at their favorite inn or tavern.

Overlook Locations Summary

The following Overlook locations come into play in this adventure. The numbers given refer to the location's position on the map of Overlook in "Siege of Bordrin's Watch."

Caer Overlook (High Hall district), 21: The seat of government in Overlook, this fortress houses the meeting chamber of the Council of Elders—called the High Hall, after which the district is named—as well as the offices of various district representatives.

The Divine Knot (Nine Bells District), 24: The Divine Knot is a corner of the Nine Bells district, occupied by an array of dirty, dilapidated temples all but clustered together, like old men huddling against the cold. The temples of Avandra, Bahamut, Erathis, Kord, the Raven Queen, and Zehir still operate, albeit with small and impoverished congregations. The old temples of Ioun, Moradin, and Pelor have long since closed. The temple of Moradin was replaced with the Stone Anvil, while the other two no longer have organized services in the city.

The Ministry of War (High Hall District), 22: A complex of several buildings around a courtyard, the Ministry of War trains Overlook's soldiers, and houses the barracks and offices of the city garrison.

The Pig and Bucket Tavern (Blister District), 5: An infamous tavern, well known for its beer hall, its wide selection of cheap drinks, and the great many criminals, mercenaries, and adventurers who frequent the place looking for work.

The Shrine of Erathis (Tradetown District), 13: A small shrine, little more than an altar and a statue. So far as the PCs know, the shrine is tended by a kindly old woman named Haelyn.

The Stone Anvil (Hammerstone District), 15: A grand cathedral to Moradin, the Stone Anvil is a combination temple and fortress. It is the most powerful church in the city, and it is currently run by High Priest Durkik Forgeheart, an old dwarf whose faith and sense of social responsibility have been slowly chipped away beneath the weight of years.

Part One: Return to Overlook

Parts One and Three of this adventure take place in the city of Overlook, first introduced in "The Siege of Bordrin's Watch," the second installment of the Scales of War (Dungeon #157). "The Temple Between" assumes that PCs are familiar with—and somewhat well known within—Overlook, and it details only those portions of the city important to this adventure. You might wish to have that adventure handy, for easy reference.

As the PCs approach the city, read:

The towering walls of Overlook rise slowly but steadily over the horizon as you draw ever nearer your destination. From a distance, the city looks as secure and serene as ever, but as you move closer, you can see that all is not as you left it. A great mass of activity bustles around the gates, people lugging stone and timber this way and that, all beneath the watchful eyes of sentinels who stand dutifully atop the wall. One particular blond-bearded dwarf in plate armor—an officer, you would assume—stands atop the gate shouting orders to everyone in sight.

Although the activity doesn't appear especially rushed or frantic—indeed, you see people pausing to talk or jest with one another as they work (and when the officer isn't looking)—it appears as though Overlook were mobilizing for war.

The PCs are hailed as they approach, while the sentinels atop the walls and by the gates offering friendly but careful greetings. Multiple crossbows are trained on the party until they identify themselves, but once they do, their welcome becomes far warmer. Several workers and soldiers stop to claps their hands, and the sentinels swiftly lower their weapons and stand taller at their posts. Word has spread of the PCs' heroics on behalf of the city so far, and their return is seen as a good omen.

If the PCs ask, any one of the workers or soldiers—or the officer, who introduces himself as Captain Aerun—tells them that yes, the city is making preparations for war. It's not that they anticipate any *specific* trouble, and indeed, the Council of Elders and the various priesthoods have reason to hope that, with the defeat of the orc invasion and the closing of the Shadowfell gate, their city is good and safe for a long time to come. Still, recent troubles have stirred up a strong "better safe than slaughtered" mentality among the populace and the city leaders, and so the Council of Elders have ordered that Overlook's defenses be repaired and enhanced.

Should the PCs question any of the locals about any *current* troubles, they receive only puzzled and slightly concerned replies. "No problems going on that *I* know about," is the common response. "Why, is there something we should be worried about?"

For at least their first few hours in Overlook, then, the PCs find no signs of the troubles that drew them here—or at least, they *probably* don't.

At least in this part of the adventure, no random urban encounters occur. At this point, the PCs are famous enough—and, more importantly, skilled enough and of a high enough level—that your average street thief or other ne'er-do-well gives them a substantially wide berth.

Subtle Changes

If the PCs have come in response to Lavinya's sending, they can proceed immediately to the temple of Erathis in the Divine Knot. If so, continue with "The Shadow of Civilization," below. Similarly, depending on what personal connections they've made in past visits to Overlook, they might also decide to visit either the Stone Anvil or Haelyn at the Shrine of Erathis. In these cases, proceed either to C3 or C4, respectively.

But in most instances, the PCs likely find somewhere to take their ease, an establishment where they can grab a bite to eat other than trail rations, and a bed somewhat softer and less bug-infested than the open earth.

It is possible that the PCs might seek out old allies (or enemies), as long as they feel they have nothing else to do. At the moment, this isn't likely to accomplish much of anything. The Council is currently far too busy dealing with preparations for war and various administrative catastrophes (some of which were engineered by Captain Aerun or other infiltrators to keep them busy), and has nothing for the PCs to do except maybe lend a hand reinforcing the gates. Bram Ironfell is currently out of town. Although you're welcome to have the PCs talk to any NPCs with whom they have a past relationship, none of it amounts to much.

Keep Track of Time

From the moment the PCs arrive in Overlook, keep track of how much time they spend. Whether they complete their exploration of the Mountainroot Temple within five days from this point, or not, impacts their ultimate chances of success when the city falls under siege. See "Victory Points," page 37, in Part Three: The Siege of Overlook.

The First Night Home

Lavinya has been making a concerted effort at contacting the PCs, and there are few places in the city she hasn't visited. Regardless of what establishment the PCs wind up patronizing, one of the servers or proprietors approaches them a few moments after they've ordered refreshments or paid for a room.

Read the following aloud:

"Begging your pardon, m'lords and ladies, but you look familiar to me. You are the folks who saved us from the orcs, and from those foul creatures of shadow, aren't you?"

Assuming the PCs affirm their identities, the server continues:

"Well, I'm sorry to disturb you and all, but there's someone been looking for you. Woman named Lavinya? She's a priestess at the temple of Erathis, over in the Divine Knot. She's been leaving messages all over town—says she desperately needs to speak with you. She begs you to come see her at the temple, just as soon as you can get there."

It's vaguely possible the PCs might refuse to go (in which case, one has to wonder if they're the heroes they're reputed to be), in which case you can have Lavinya track them down at some point over the next day or two. The adventure, as written, assumes that the PCs agree to meet with her, either immediately or the following day.

The Shadow of Civilization

As the PCs pass through the Divine Knot, read the following:

You cannot help but notice, as you pass, that the old temple of Moradin appears to be under as much construction as the city ramparts. Great frameworks and ladders stand alongside the building, and you can see lumber stacked along the inner walls through the open windows. It looks as though not every priesthood in Overlook is as badly off these days as that of Erathis.

Even as compared to other temples of the Knot, the temple of Erathis has seen better days. As the PCs approach, read:

It's all but impossible to tell what color the stones of this temple might once have been, for now they're a repugnant mixture of smoke-stained gray, dirty-handprint brown, and bird-dropping white. The stenches of the Nine Bells district appear to congregate here, as though seeking admittance and absolution, and you've seen zombies that looked (and smelled) healthier than some of the unfortunate, impoverished souls shambling along the streets with empty eyes.

Three wide steps that don't appear to have been swept in days rise toward a heavy wooden door that boasts a relatively fresh coat of polish—one that cannot begin to conceal the rot beneath.

Regardless of the time of day or night, when the PCs enter they see a largely empty cathedral, its pews old and candles burned down to nubs. At the far end stands an altar to Erathis, which is far better maintained than anything around it. A dark-haired and gold-robed half-elf, grown old before her time, kneels before the altar, rising and turning at the sound of the door.

"Thank you," she says as she recognizes the PCs. "I knew Erathis would guide you to me."

For a few moments she waits on the PCs, offering what comfort she can, pointing them toward the pews at the front of the cathedral (the cleanest ones), offering a few glasses of cheap wine, and the like.

Only once they're settled—or when they lose patience and press her on why she summoned them—does she frown thoughtfully and begin.

"My name is Lavinya," she tells you. "I'm the last priestess here; the others all departed years ago, when the Nine Bells went all to seed, and the temples with it. I keep it open and functioning as best I can on my own, but . . "

She shakes her head, as though reminding herself to stay on topic. "Do you know Haelyn?" she asks.

If the PCs do not, she says the following:

"Haelyn is a wonderful old woman. She's the caretaker of the shrine to Erathis, over in Tradetown."

If the PCs do know Haelyn, skip that particular bit of dialogue and continue with the following sets of text. They have been broken up to allow for more interaction, but if none is forthcoming, continue to the next set of text.

"I'm sure you know," she continues, "that most worship of Erathis in Overlook takes place there, rather than here. I must admit, I haven't always been a friend to Haelyn. I was . . . bitter, very bitter, at what happened to my temple. But after a time, we got to know each other, and we've become great friends.

"And that's why I need you!" Lavinya looks up, her eyes suddenly narrowed. "Something is wrong! Something's happened to Haelyn, I know it, and maybe not just to her!"

At this point, Lavinya takes a sip of her drink, then says:

"A few weeks ago, Haelyn just disappeared. I went by the shrine to speak with her and she was gone. There's a man named Grovald maintaining the shrine now. I don't know him; I've never met him before, and nobody I talk to knows him, either. He told me that Haelyn left on a spiritual retreat and would be back in a few months.

"But I know better! Haelyn needed no 'spiritual retreat.' Her faith was strong, and it was centered on that shrine! And even if she had, she wouldn't have up and left—not without telling me."

Now Lavinya shakes her head and gauges the reactions of the PCs, then continues:

"I must confess, I went back at night and snooped around a bit, not just in the shrine, but peering through the windows of the groundskeeper's cottage. I've offered penance to Erathis for my trespass, but I had to know what happened! I didn't . . . I found no trace of Haelyn, but I did catch a glimpse of a letter through the cracks in the shutters. I couldn't read much of it, and I dared not stay long, but I'm certain it was addressed to 'G'—that must be Grovald, right?—and it began with 'I am commanded to ask if you've had any further problems with the worshipers of . . .' That's all I saw, but it sounds sinister enough!

"And that," she says morosely, "is where things got even worse. I went to the authorities, but they told me there was nothing to look into, that Haelyn—or any citizen—can travel as they please. I spoke to some of the other priests—Aelys of Bahamut, Durkik of Moradin at the Stone Anvil, Kyrrist of Avandra, even Matron Volorvyn of the Raven Queen. Some of these have long been my friends, and even those who were not have at least been respected colleagues. And all of them brushed me off! They were distant, uncaring, even cold, as though my worries were of no moment! Volorvyn appeared barely to recognize me, and while we've never been close, we've known one another on and off for years."

Lavinya looks at each of the PCs, one by one, while continuing:

"And that's when I thought of you, Overlook's new heroes. I'm terrified that something has happened to my friend and that something is wrong with my fellow priests. I should, we all should, be showering you with gifts and thanks, not heaping even more cares onto your shoulders—but I've little influence left in this city, and I have nobody else to whom I can turn."

Lavinya smiles gratefully when the PCs agree. (Again, the adventure, as written, assumes they do so.)

She can't offer much in the way of additional information, though she does try to advise the PCs if they ask her council.

"You could talk to one of the priests, I suppose," she mutters doubtfully. "I'm not sure they'd agree to speak with you at any length, though. Everyone's so busy with the mobilization. And these are important people; you can't just, uh, 'hero' your way into the building and confront them," she adds with a smile. "Still you might learn something from them.

"You could examine the shrine of Erathis. You might well find something I missed. Or you could search Haelyn's home, which is on the same lot as the shrine. I looked for her there, but when she didn't answer, it felt wrong for me to just barge in. But now . . ." She shrugs.

Lavinya can, of course, give the PCs directions to any of these locations, or any other public location of which they might ask her.

If the PCs ask her (or anyone else around town) about the work going on at the old temple of Moradin, she answers as follows:

"Oh, that. High Ancestor Durkik recently assigned most of his underpriests to restoring the old temple. Something about wanting to expand, I think, so that other races who might not be comfortable in the Stonehammer district could return to Moradin."

Finally, if your players are accustomed to using sword and spell to deal with *every* obstacle and aren't used to subtlety and restraint, you can use Lavinya—who is, after all, a priest of the goddess of civilization—to remind them to behave themselves. The PCs do not have any *legal* authority here, after all. They can fight to defend themselves, and against any criminal element they might discover, but they can't just pull steel on a high priest or a squad of city watch and expect things to go their way. Some element of discretion is *vital*.

Out of Order

Don't worry if the PCs do things in a different order than presented here; everything still works. For instance, if they go to the Shrine of Erathis and begin investigating Haelyn's disappearance on their own, you can still have them receive Lavinya's message later that same evening. Everything that needs to happen can happen regardless of when the PCs get to it.

Investigating Overlook

The PCs have a variety of approaches they can take here, and a number of locations of interest.

Don't, however, feel that you *must* force the PCs to stick only to the locations presented below. If they come up with another avenue of investigation, you can "wing it" and let them pursue that course, perhaps allowing them to find their answers some other way. You can try to gently guide them back on track; perhaps other NPCs also express suspicion of Grovald, or comment on priests acting peculiarly. Or you might run an extra ambush encounter (see C7, below), giving the PCs another opportunity to question their attackers, and thus pointing them back toward Captain Aerun.

C1: The Stone Anvil

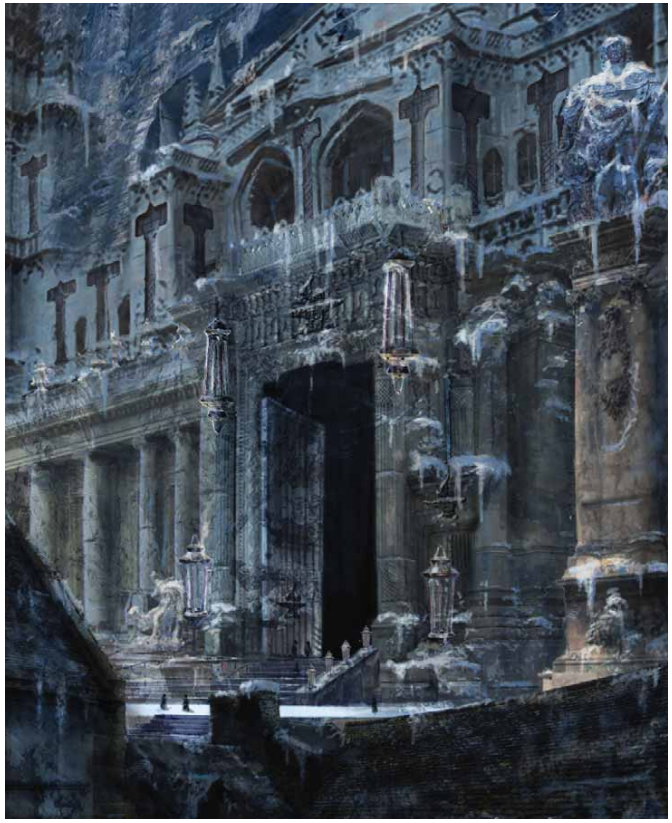
Under normal circumstances, a group with such a disparate racial makeup as the party would have a few problems sauntering through the dwarf-heavy (and elitist) district of Stonehammer. Their current status as heroes of the city, however, grants the PCs a bit of leeway.

As they approach the Stone Anvil, read the following:

As compared to so much of the rest of Overlook, the Stonehammer district might almost be a different city. Broad, clean streets flow like rivers of rock between enormous, sweeping edifices, carved with near magical precision. The air is clean here, and the voices you hear are raised in laughter or negotiation, without the tinge of desperation so common in some of the poorer quarters.

And then you are there. It rises up before you like a fortress, constructed of blocks of stone larger than many of Overlook's houses. At its height, looking down upon even its tallest neighboring buildings, glint leaded windows in the shape of hammers. The doors at the entryway stand open, inviting all who would worship, and a good thing it is—for these doors are 40 feet high if they're an inch, and the lot of you together might have difficulty dragging them open.

This is the Stone Anvil, temple of Moradin and the spiritual heart of Overlook.



A Collection of Clues

For DMs not accustomed to running this sort of investigation, this sidebar presents the various bits of information the PCs can pick up in each of the following encounters, just to help you keep it straight.

C1: At the Stone Anvil, the PCs learn that High Ancestor Durkik adamantly doesn't want them snooping around.

C2: The PCs learn that the Ironfell Clan is one of the investors in the reconstruction of the old temple of Moradin in the Divine Knot—but this is a red herring and is not relevant to the ongoing investigation. More relevant is the admission by Ancestor Karros that High Ancestor Durkik is not acting himself lately.

C3: At the other temples, the PCs can experience for themselves the fact that many of the city's high priests are acting peculiarly.

C4 and C5: During the day, the PCs learn only that the people don't especially trust the new caretaker, Grovald, and possibly that Haelyn didn't pack up for a "spiritual journey." If they return at night, they can locate the body of Haelyn and learn of Grovald's connection to Durkik either through an interrogation or the half-burned note.

C6: If the PCs go to the authorities, they might discover that Captain Aerun appears more interested in keeping them out of any subsequent investigation than in investigating.

C7: If the PCs question their ambushers, they learn that a corrupt city watchperson has hired them and can be found nightly at the Pig and Bucket.

C8: At the Pig and Bucket, the PCs learn (or confirm) that the corrupt guardsman is Aerun.

Culmination: The PCs should be suspicious of either Durkik, Aerun, or both. They can follow either of them to the warehouse (C9), leading to the conclusion of this portion of the adventure.

If the PCs peer into the sanctuary—which is no less sweeping, magnificent, and ostentatious than the building's exterior—they see about a hundred worshipers (if they came during the day) or about a dozen worshipers (if they came at night) engaged in prayer, heads bowed and chanting in low, sonorous voices. As usual, the overwhelming majority of the faithful here are dwarves. The services are being led by a young dwarf female who reads from a great, steel-bound tome that, when open, is nearly as broad as she is. There is no sign here of anything out of the ordinary, or of High Ancestor Durkik himself.

If the PCs examine the halls surrounding the main sanctuary, however, things don't appear so mundane. A great many tasks appear to have been left undone; floors are not swept, candelabras are unpolished, torches and braziers have been allowed to burn out. (If the PCs ask any of the faithful about this, they are once again told that most of Durkik's underpriests are currently hard at work restoring the old temple in the Divine Knot.)

If they explore farther still, going deeper into the temple than most worshipers ever travel, they don't have long to explore. Within mere moments, High Ancestor Durkik appears, accompanied by a contingent of the city watch. He demands, in no uncertain terms, that the PCs depart immediately. The guards are apologetic—they recognize the PCs as heroes—but adamant. The priest has the legal and religious authority to demand that the party leaves, and the guards are here to ensure they do just that.

Still, while they haven't learned any concrete details, the PCs can now be pretty sure that something odd is afoot at the Stone Anvil.

If the PCs return at night, with the intent of spying on or following High Ancestor Durkik, proceed to the Heart of the Conspiracy skill challenge, below.

Interrogation

Several of the following encounters allow the PCs the opportunity to interrogate their foes, if they take any alive. When dealing with a human thug or a doppelganger assassin, this is a level 8 skill challenge; when dealing with Grovald or the false Durkik, it is level 9. In either case, the challenge has a complexity of 2, with Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Insight as the primary skills. PCs can use Religion, with an easy check, against Grovald or the false Durkik (revealing that they're not true followers of Erathis or Moradin), or Streetwise, with an easy check, against the others (to discover some of their criminal affiliations). These don't qualify as successes, but grant the PCs +2 bonuses to other checks in the challenge until their next failure. Similarly, a promise of freedom buys a +2 bonus to all such checks, and a bribe of at least 100 gp grants an automatic success with the thugs and doppelgangers, but not Grovald or the false Durkik.

If the PCs succeed, the subject answers all their questions. If they fail, but with one or more successes, the subject answers a number of questions equal to the PCs successes, but at least one answer is a lie.

If the PCs wish, they can question enemies they've killed, using the Speak with Dead ritual. In this case, use the "Dead Witness" skill challenge (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 78, as either a level 8 or level 9 challenge, as appropriate).

See the individual entries for suggestions on what information the NPCs can offer.

C2: The Temple of Moradin in the Divine Knot

The PCs might decide to look more thoroughly at the old temple of Moradin to see if any answers lie there. Although the PCs might be briefly misdirected by a red herring or two, they can also make a friend within the ranks of Moradin's priests who reinforces their suspicions of High Ancestor Durkik.

As the PCs arrive at the temple, read:

The amount of work going on here makes the place look less like a house of worship and more like an anthill on a massive scale. Workers of all races scurry through doors and windows, clambering up scaffolds of wood and iron. The sounds of grunts, curses, shouted orders, and the monotonous thump of hammers on nails make it all but impossible to hear yourself think.

Once the PCs enter the structure, continue:

The work continues inside as well as out. Workers with boards on their shoulders, wheelbarrows, or heavy hammers move back and forth before you. The floor is covered with dust, both stone and wood, and heaps of rubble lie in every corner.

Not everyone here is a simple laborer, however. Leaning against the leftmost wall, her eyes narrowing as she watches you, is a young, heavily muscled woman clad in scale armor. One hand rests on the hilt of a longsword at her waist.

Assuming the PCs have played through prior installments of the Scales of War, they recognize the warrior immediately. This is Megan Swiftblade, leader of an adventuring party called the Freeriders. Though their interactions when they first met might have been friendly enough, Megan and her team resent the PCs

for becoming greater heroes of Overlook than they, and while that resentment doesn't equate to true hatred or hostility—the Freeriders aren't evil—they aren't inclined to do the PCs any favors.

Then again, Megan's not the one the PCs have the most worry about. As soon as the PCs attempt to move farther into the room, or to speak to or attract anyone's attention, read:

Abruptly, one of the dwarf workers turns and stops in front of you, coming within inches of running his wheelbarrow over [insert a character's name]'s foot. He hitches his thumbs through his belt—a gesture that puts one hand uncomfortably near the haft of his hammer—and glares with beady eyes above a dirty beard. "You bastards ain't welcome here," he announces gruffly. "You might have the rest of the city hoodwinked, but not us."

This particularly unpleasant dwarf is Murrik Ironfell, a member of the Ironfell Clan with whom the PCs came into conflict back in "The Lost Mines of Karak." He's not shy about introducing himself, so the PCs shouldn't wonder long why he's bothering them. And many of the other workers on site are also of that clan, slowly assembling around Murrik as he continues to taunt the PCs. Megan and the other Freeriders begin to assemble as well. If the PCs ask her why she's here, she tells them, "The priests of Moradin hired us to make sure the old temple was free of any dangerous people or creatures for the renovation. You're starting to look dangerous to me."

You can let this go on for a few minutes, allowing the PCs and Murrik to exchange threats and insults.

Once it appears ready to escalate into violence, the PCs agree to back down, or they continue to insist to see someone in charge, read the following:

A red-bearded dwarf, clad in worker's leathers and a smock but with the hammer of Moradin hanging about his neck, pushes his way through the crowd. "All right, all of you back to work!" he barks. Turning to you, he bows his head with cold politeness. "I'm Ancestor Karros of Moradin," he says. "Why don't I escort you out?"

Ancestor Karros says little as he walks with the PCs back through the main door and down the steps, but the party can get him to open up. This level 7 skill challenge has a complexity of 1 and uses Bluff, Diplomacy, and Religion (to establish a common ground) as the primary skills. If the PCs succeed, Karros becomes a bit more talkative and—assuming the PCs ask the right questions or steer the conversation in the right direction—eventually provides the following information.

- High Priest Durkik has assigned almost the entire staff of the Stone Anvil to working on the reconstruction of the old temple. He's barely kept enough priests on hand there to conduct regular services. Karros doesn't speak ill of Durkik, but he hints at the fact that he doesn't approve. The idea of the renovation came out of nowhere, and neither Karros nor the other priests can figure out *why* it's being done.
- Durkik called for investors from Overlook's dwarves to aid in the reconstruction. The Ironfell Clan was among those to contribute money and workers. Many of the workers have been speaking poorly about the PCs any time their status as "heroes" comes up in conversation.
- Although he appears almost unwilling to admit it, Karros confesses that Durkik hasn't been himself for weeks now. He's worried about the old priest.

C3: Other Temples in the Divine Knot

If the PCs attempt to speak with any of the other priests in the Divine Knot, the priests politely listen to their concerns, promise to look into them, thank the PCs for their time, and ask them to leave. Allow the PCs to attempt a DC 20 Insight check; if they succeed, they realize that the priests act somewhat distant—as though they were distracted or preoccupied with something pressing.

If the PCs return at night, with the intent of spying on or following any of the priests, proceed to the Heart of the Conspiracy skill challenge, below.

C4: The Shrine of Erathis

As the PCs approach the shrine, read:

As compared to Overlook's temples, this shrine is poor indeed—and yet it offers a sense of intimacy that the greater edifices do not. Several wooden poles stuck in the earth support walls and ceiling of heavy fabric, barely enough to keep the rain off the altar within it. The altar is littered with candle stubs and scraps of parchment, which are the remnants of prayers and offerings.

Beyond the makeshift sanctuary, a statue of Erathis stands in the middle of a pool of stagnant water, staring off toward the horizon. Many of the bricks of the pool are broken or missing, and a closer glance suggests that the "statue" was in fact a fountain at one point, but the mechanism has failed—likely many years ago.

Several rickety cottages stand on the edge of the property, apparently held together by little more than faith and an extra coating of paint.

If the PCs come during the day, continue with the following:

Several townsfolk move in and out of the curtain-housed shrine, leaving written prayers on the altar and occasionally glancing askance at a fellow who paces behind it. He is a tall human, bald-headed with features sharp as an eagle's, clad all in somber black. He mutters to himself as he paces.

Insight Check
DC 16: *It's pretty clear from his body language that the man doesn't want to be here, though any time one of the citizens utters a prayer to Erathis, he replies with a quick "So may it be."*

If the PCs speak with him, he introduces himself as Grovald. He answers any questions about Haelyn with the same "spiritual retreat" story he gave Lavinya (and no, he doesn't know where she went or when she'll be back). If the PCs press him or try to talk about any other issue, he insists that he's busy praying along with his faithful and returns to pacing. At this point, he starts muttering more loudly, offering prayers to Erathis. A DC 18 Insight check suggests he's lying about Haelyn.

Again, the PCs' reputation as saviors of Overlook comes to the rescue.

After the quick exchange with Grovald (and before the PCs can contemplate doing something foolish in front of witnesses), read the following:

One of the faithful, an older woman dressed in shabby but well-mended shawl and dress, stands up from the altar and turns her eyes on you. "I know you!" she calls out. "Thank you so much for all you've done!"

As she approaches you, however, she glances once at Grovald and her eyes narrow. In a much softer tone of voice, she says, "I couldn't help but overhear, and a lot of us have asked him the same questions. We don't trust him, and we're worried about Haelyn. Almost nobody comes here after dark anymore, so if you want the chance to talk to him in private, when he's not so 'busy,' that'd be a good time to come back. Maybe you can find out what's going on."

The PCs can take a casual look around the grounds during the day, and Grovald doesn't stop them. But any attempt to look inside cottage C4A, or any *thorough* searching (such as climbing inside the fountain) brings threats of him calling the watch and having the PCs charged with trespassing. (As long as they're at least a *little bit* subtle, he doesn't appear to notice if

Interrogating Grovald or His Soldiers

Assuming the PCs ask the right questions or guide the conversation down the proper path, they learn the following information.

From the Thugs or Doppelgangers: These are simple hoods and members of the Lost Ones criminal organization. Someone has been coming to the Lost Ones to hire out a *lot* of extra muscle. This particular group of thugs was hired by Grovald. They don't know who *he* works for, but they've seen him meeting with a dwarf on occasion. They don't know who *else* has been hiring muscle, or if they're tied into the same conspiracy, but they know that they're far from the only thugs to be hired as soldiers lately.

From Grovald: Grovald grudgingly admits that he killed Haelyn and buried her behind the fountain. He claims he was ordered to do so by individuals who didn't like her poking her nose in where it wasn't wanted. If pressed, he confesses that he's ultimately working for someone named General Zithiruun. Grovald doesn't know what he's a general *of*, and he doesn't know what species, for the general wears a hooded cloak, but he does wear a strange armor of iron joints and leather harnesses. At the moment, though, Grovald takes his orders from Durkik, high priest of "that rock-headed idiot god." He knows that Durkik spends most of his time at the temple, but that the high priest frequently disappears for the night; to where, Grovald doesn't know.

If pressed on the issue, Grovald confesses that he is the priest of "the master of darkness." (A DC 10 Religion check reveals this to be an occasional title for Zehir.) Grovald claims that his involvement here is purely mercenary—and this is the truth because he was paid for his assistance—but PCs who don't believe him might wind up chasing false clues for a bit, seeking a Zehir connection..

Speaking with Haelyn

If the PCs use Speak with Dead on Haelyn, there's no need for a skill challenge; she's happy to aid them. Alas, all she can tell them is that Grovald murdered her as she prayed in the shrine for guidance. She had recently noticed a change in the personalities of various priests in the city, but was laughed off when she confronted them. (She admits, now, that it was foolish of her to let on that she suspected them, but she's been a trusting sort.) She was praying that Erathis would send a sign of what to do next when Grovald entered and slew her with his magic. She asks the PCs to please thank Lavinya for her concern.

they poke around Haelyn's shack at C5, at least not during the day.)

If and when the PCs return here at night, proceed to the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: C4/C5 The Shrine of Erathis and Haelyn's Home (page 41).

C5: Haelyn's Home

As the PCs approach, read:

This small cottage on the grounds of the shrine looks comfortable, but old and rickety. Bricks are missing from the chimney, and the paint is peeling from the walls.

The door is locked, requiring a DC 18 Thievery check to open. Once the PCs enter, read:

The dust of days, if not weeks, lies over a homey little abode. An ash-filled fireplace stands in one corner, with an old table and two equally old, but comfortable looking, chairs beside it. A pantry stands alongside a door that would almost have to lead to the bedroom.

A faint stench, foul and out of place with the cottage's peaceful appearance, tickles your nostrils.

The PCs find no trace that anyone has been in here in some time. In the bedroom, clothes are packed neatly in the chest by the foot of the bed, piled almost as high as the lid will allow.

The stench is coming from the pantry, which contains several rotting vegetables, fruits, and cuts of meat, all swarming with ants and fruit flies. The players can probably figure out what this means, but if not, allow them a DC 5 Intelligence check to realize that perishable foods in the pantry and a chest of clothes almost completely full are *not* signs of someone who was preparing for a long journey.

C6: The Ministry of War

At some point in their investigations, the PCs might decide to try going to the authorities and getting some help. If they do so, they're directed to the Ministry of War—specifically, the office wherein the officers of the city garrison work.

As the PCs approach, read the following:

The Ministry of War is huge, consisting of six buildings arrayed around a central courtyard—all within an imposing set of guard walls, of course. As you approach the gate, two guards, a dwarf and a dragonborn, step forward and cross their spears before you. "State your business within," the dwarf demands.

The guards have no intention of barring the PCs' path, since the Ministry of War is open to all during business hours. They're just following protocol. Once the PCs explain their purpose, the guards are happy to provide directions to the office, which is in one of the buildings nearest the main entrance to the compound.

Once the PCs enter the office, read:

A dwarf stands up from behind the desk as you enter. His blond beard is tightly braided, his armor brightly polished. It takes you only a moment to recognize him as the officer you saw shouting orders from the wall when you first arrived in Overlook.

"I'm Captain Aerun," he says in a gruff voice. "I'm honored to have Overlook's heroes in my office. What can I help you with?"

Aerun listens intently and politely, scowling in anger when the PCs mention some of the vile things they've seen, and shaking his head if they mention having found Haelyn's body and/or killing Grovald. Ultimately, however, regardless of what the PCs tell him, Aerun's response is the same.

"These are indeed grave matters you bring to me," he says. "I'll get looking into them at once. And you once again have the thanks of a grateful city. Go on and take a load off, wherever you're staying. I'll let you know how the investigation turns out."

No matter how the PCs argue, Aerun refuses to allow them to take part in the investigation, going so far as to *order* them to stay out of it, and leave further efforts to the proper authorities. If they show any signs of hostility, argue with him for *too* long, or demand to speak to someone else, he calls in several guards to escort the PCs out. The guards are deferential, since they respect the party a great deal, but they follow orders.

During this exchange, allow the PCs to make Insight checks. With a DC 16, a character recognizes that Aerun is more interested in keeping them out of the investigation than he is in finding out the truth. With a DC 20, the character realizes that something about Aerun's behavior isn't right; even though he's engaged in the conversation, something about him appears vaguely distant, as though he's thinking about something else. If the PCs have been to visit the priests at the various temples in the Divine Knot, they recognize this as the same behavioral quirk.

If the PCs come back at night, with the intent of spying on or following Aerun, they see him depart in civilian clothes. Eventually, he leads them to the Pig and Bucket (see C8).

C7: Ambush in the Alley

Precisely when this encounter occurs depends on the PCs. (Don't assume it has to happen after the scenes described previously, just because it's given as C7 on the list.) The attack happens on a random street corner when any *one* of the following events have occurred:

- The PCs have been to the Stone Anvil and at least one other location mentioned here as part of this investigation, or
- The PCs have been to see Captain Aerun and at least one other location mentioned here as part of this investigation, or
- The PCs have defeated Grovald and his soldiers in combat.

Obviously, the attack doesn't occur *instantly* after these conditions are met, but some point in the next few hours, as the PCs are traveling about the city.

Tactical Encounter: C7 Ambush in the Alley (page 43).

Interrogating the Ambushers

Assuming the PCs ask the right questions or guide the conversation down the proper path, they can learn the following information:

These hoods had orders to attack them. They normally work for the Lost Ones criminal organization, but in recent weeks, customers have been coming to the Lost Ones to hire out a *lot* of extra muscle. This particular group of thugs was hired out to, of all people, a city watch member! The hoods don't know his name, but they know him by appearance. He shows up at the Pig and Bucket almost every night so they can report to him and receive their orders. They don't know who he works for, only that they're to follow his orders. They know that he often heads out into the city after leaving the Pig and Bucket, and *not* in the direction of the High Hall district, but they don't know where he goes.

Similarly, they don't know who *else* has been hiring muscle, or if they're tied into the same conspiracy, but they know that they're far from the only thugs to be hired as soldiers lately.

If asked, they describe the guardsman as a blond-bearded dwarf with a gruff voice. If the PCs have been to see Captain Aerun, further description appears to match him perfectly.

C8: The Pig and Bucket

The Pig and Bucket is a cheap, filthy, yet unaccountably popular one-story tavern in the district called the Blister. Squished between a couple of boarding houses said to sell a lot more than just board, it's known for its wide variety of beers, and its wide variety of crooks, mercenaries, and thugs who frequent the place looking for work.

If the PCs enter, read:

Most of the building's interior consists of the beer hall. Booths line the walls, while long tables and rear-bruising benches fill the middle of the room between. Along the far wall runs a wooden bar—you can see the graffiti carved into it even from here—behind which stand stacks of kegs.

Assuming the PCs are here at night, looking for (or having followed) Captain Aerun, they can see him in one of the far booths, speaking to a scruffy looking individual in a shabby gray cloak. If the PCs have taken steps to disguise themselves, Aerun doesn't recognize them. If they have not, they have exactly 1 round to do something with themselves before he notices them.

Hopefully, the PCs are wise enough either to disguise themselves, or to wait outside. If he sees them, he keeps drinking for a few minutes, then leaves and casually returns to the Ministry of War, and the PCs have lost their chance to follow him that night.

If the PCs remain unnoticed, however, and try to follow Aerun after he departs, continue with the Heart of the Conspiracy skill challenge.

Interrogating the Possessed

Unfortunately, the possessed individuals—including Aerun and several priests other than Durkik—are effectively immune to interrogation. After all, the PCs cannot offer them anything they require, and they have no fear, for they can abandon the body and return to their own. If, however, the PCs try to interrogate them, a DC 21 Insight check reveals that the individuals are possessed by an outside force. If the possessing githyanki realizes the PCs know this, it immediately leaves the body, which falls to the ground as a dead shell.

The Heart of the Conspiracy

After a day or two of investigation, the PCs should have a couple of strong suspects: Captain Aerun and High Ancestor Durkik. They might suspect some of the other priests as well. If they choose, and put themselves in a position to do so, they can follow any one of these individuals to the warehouse wherein the conspiracy makes its headquarters. They can accomplish this with an extended skill challenge.

Skill Challenge: SC1 Catching Durkik (page 44).

C9: The Warehouse

This warehouse, located in the midst of the Blister district, is the headquarters of the conspiracy and the location where they're holding the real Durkik.

As the PCs approach, read:

Nothing in particular makes this warehouse stand out. It's a large, squat building, with a huge front door that opens by sliding up into the ceiling on rails. A rickety wooden staircase along one wall leads to a door that presumably opens onto an upper level.

Under normal circumstances, assume that the two githyanki-possessed individuals at the warehouse are Captain Aerun and Goodman Kyrrist, priest of Avondra. If the PCs have done something to prevent one of these two from being present, replace the missing with one of the other possessed priests (named in Lavinya's tale).

Tactical Encounter: C9 The Warehouse (page 45).

Interrogating the Conspirators

As before, the PCs can interrogate any captives or survivors (except the two possessed individuals).

Assuming the PCs ask the right questions or guide the conversation down the proper path, they can learn the following information:

The conspirator reveals that a doppelganger has taken the place of the *real* high priest Durkik, who is being held prisoner in a secret chamber beneath the warehouse. He tells the PCs he is working for someone called General Zithiruun. Like Grovald, he hasn't seen Zithiruun's face, but recognizes him by his hooded cloak and his strange leather-and-steel harness. He knows that Zithiruun wants them to hold the Stone Anvil, and to question Durkik about the security and magic of another temple, called "Mountainroot." The false Durkik assigned most of the priests of Moradin to rebuilding the old temple as a means of keeping them occupied and out of the Stone Anvil.

The conspirator does not know why Zithiruun is interested in this "Mountainroot Temple." He knows only that Zithiruun has grown more and more frustrated with Durkik's failure to answer their questions; a few days ago, he stormed off insisting that he was going to "find out for himself," though he ordered them to keep trying in his absence, and record what they learned.

C9A: Rescuing Durkik

When the PCs descend the ladder beneath the trapdoor in the warehouse, read:

You are within a narrow, stone-walled hallway. Mildew darkens the mortar between the bricks and fills the air with the damp scent of rot. A steel door, speckled with rust, stands at the far end of the hall. It boasts a small barred window, but from here you cannot see what might lie beyond.

Once the PCs near the door and can see through the bars, continue:

A dwarf, his flesh bruised and beaten, his hair and beard matted with blood, stands chained to the far wall of a stench-ridden, claustrophobic cell. It takes you a moment to recognize him as none other than High Priest Durkik Forgeheart!

Slowly, as though even so minor a move pains him, he looks up to meet your gaze through the bars, his eyes widening slightly as he recognizes you. "Be careful," he rasps in a hoarse voice. "The door's trapped."

He gestures with a finger, the chain clinking, to indicate a series of tubes that protrude from the walls of the cell, pointing in his direction. "And not to kill you, either," he adds impassively. "They don't want me escaping."

The door can be picked with a DC 21 Thievery check (as can the chains on his wrists, once the PCs move inside), but if the door is opened without the safeguards being disabled, one or more of the tubes fires a sharpened spike into Durkik's chest, killing him. The "trap" is three traps, each of which must be disabled.

3 Spike Tubes **Level 9 Warder**
Trap XP 400

Hidden tubes with powerful springs lurk within the walls, waiting to launch brutal iron spikes.

Perception
- ✦ DC 24: Through careful study, you determine how the mechanism fits together, allowing you to advise your allies how to work on it. This grants your allies a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable the trap. (Each of the three traps requires a separate Perception check to grant this bonus.)

Initiative +10

Trigger
If the PCs open the door without disarming all three traps, or if the characters fail four total countermeasure attempts (see below), all remaining traps fire.

Attack
Standard Action **Melee** 2
Target: Everyone within the cell.
Attack: +17 vs. AC; a prisoner chained by the manacles in the cell is hit automatically.
Hit: 2d8+7 damage; against a prisoner chained by the manacles, this is considered a coup de grace attack, dealing 23 damage per functioning trap. In Durkik's case, this is more than enough to kill him.

Countermeasures
- ✦ A character adjacent to the cell door can reach through the bars and attempt to physically wrench a tube off-target, thus disarming it, with a DC 28 Athletics check. Only two of the three traps are positioned to make this possible.
- ✦ A character adjacent to the cell door can disarm one of the three tubes with a DC 28 Thievery check.

If the PCs accidentally trigger the trap, Durkik gasps, "Bring me . . . to Karros . . ." with his last, choking breath.

Some Answers and Some Help

The following section is written under the assumption that the PCs successfully rescue Durkik from the cell (or, failing that, that one of them casts the Raise Dead ritual on him). If this is not the case, the PCs might cast Speak with Dead or, if they follow his dying wish, take him to Ancestor Karros. After finding out from the PCs what happened, Karros casts Speak with Dead. In these cases, do not use the standard rules for Speak with Dead, since Durkik's spirit is lingering, hoping to help. Instead, it uses the connection opened by the ritual to converse with them normally. Thus, you can still run the scene largely as written here; change any of his offers to accompany the PCs to him ordering Karros to do the same.

Once the PCs free Durkik, read the following:

The dwarf slowly limps from his cell, wincing with every step. Clearly he is in a great deal of pain, but despite that fact, his eyes are alert.

"Thank you," he says simply. "You're the answer to every prayer I've offered Moradin. But I fear, as grateful as I am to be out and alive, that I've little good news for you."

The PCs can help him as he talks. You can allow the PCs to ask questions and roleplay the conversation, or give them the information Durkik provides.

First, thanks to everything he overheard and the questions he was asked, Durkik knows roughly what the conspirators were up to. If the PCs don't already have it, he can provide all the information given above under the "Interrogating the Conspirators" text. He tells the PCs that Aerun and some of the other priests were possessed in a dark ritual, but that he was not because General Zithiruun required information from him.

At this point, Durkik tells the PCs about the Mountainroot Temple (all the information presented under that heading in the Background section).

Once he has shared the above information, read the following:

"As you've doubtless guessed," he says to you, his voice still weak, "the Stone Anvil contains one of those portals to the Mountainroot Temple. I don't know why this General Zithiruun wants the temple, but it's clearly what he's after.

"It's funny, he's had me tortured for days to make me describe the Mountainroot's mystical defenses, but the truth is, I don't know much about them. I know about the temple only because, as High Priest, I was told of it by my predecessor. I can tell you that the defenses are psychically linked to the Caretaker, allowing him to control them, but beyond that, I know little. But even had I told them that much, I doubt they'd have believed me."

Durkik coughs twice, then continues:

"I don't know why he wants the temple," he repeats, "but I know it cannot be good for us. I know not who else in this city might have been compromised—who can be trusted. That leaves only you.

"The entrance from the Stone Anvil is carefully hidden within an old sepulcher. The chamber is hidden behind a secret door; I can escort you to it, but no farther. What I cannot do is tell you how to access the portal, for I don't know, and I am oathbound never to enter the sepulcher. But my hope is that, once you find it, you can figure out how to use it.

"I must ask you one thing more," he adds swiftly. "When the Mountainroot Temple was abandoned, the priesthood took most of our ancient religious relics with them. Most, but not all. Somewhere within the temple lies a tome entitled, when translated into Common, the Incunabulum Primeval. It is a book of great power for those who know how to use it. If you can find it and return it to us, I can promise you a reward of no less than 3,600 gp from the temple treasury, as well as legal right to any other treasure you find in, and can carry out of, the Mountainroot."

Back to the Stone Anvil

Durkik (or Karros, if Durkik is dead) leads the PCs back through the towering halls of the Stone Anvil. (The PCs might decide to take an extended rest first and approach the temple the following day. If they're badly depleted, you might even suggest this to them.) Several of the priests and guards appear nervous about allowing the PCs to pass, but none are prepared to gainsay their guide.

Read the following:

After a dozen halls and several wide stairs, your guide stops inside a great chamber. Shelves of old scrolls line the stone walls, and great marble tables occupy the room's center. Dust lies thick over it all, proving that this room is rarely used.

For a few moments, the priest fumbles with the scrolls on one particular rack. Finally, a loud click resounds throughout the room, and one of the walls slides open with a deafening rumble and a cascade of powdered stone.

"This is it," he tells you. "The sepulcher. I cannot go any farther."

C10: The Portal in the Sepulcher

Read the following (and consider drawing out the map whether or not combat ensues, since the room can be difficult to envision):

You are standing at one end of a long chamber. Chandeliers hanging from the ceiling spring to life even as you pass through the secret door, illuminating all that lies before you.

To the right and left, stairs lead down to an open lower level, transforming the floor on which you now stand into a central walkway, with two narrower ledges along both sides of the room. At even intervals along those walkways the floor abruptly widens, almost like the teeth on a gear.

At the far end of the chamber, a bright silver filigree of unimaginable complexity bulges from the wall. It shows a scene of Moradin hard at work at his forge. Four statues—two flanking the filigree, two flanking the entrance—show Moradin with a pair of ravens perched on his shoulders. Perhaps these are meant to honor the Raven Queen, who watches over even Moradin's dead?

The PCs can discover that the remains of the honored dead must be interred inside, and they must descend to the lower level to find the name plates.

Read the following when they move down:

The open space between those protrusions slopes sharply down from the walkway to lower level.

Once the PCs draw near the filigree imagine, continue:

Now that you've come closer, you can see an old stone door in the wall behind the filigree image. You can, however, see no way to access it.

Should any PC touch the filigree in any way, read:

The image suddenly bends as the face of Moradin turns toward you and speaks in a voice of rending metal. "Who would step through the portal to the heart of Moradin's worship must first prove he understands Moradin in his own heart.

"Think you carefully on Moradin's precepts, his teachings, his actions, and his favored disciples. Then speak unto me a parable, a tale of Moradin, not that you have learned from his texts, but that you have created yourself. Let it show your understanding of his words and his ways, and you may pass."

Should any PC touch the filigree in any way, begin the skill challenge.

Skill Challenge: SC2 Entering the Portal (page 48).

Tactical Encounter: C10 The Portal in the Sepulcher (page 49).

Part Two: The Mountainroot Temple

The PCs are almost certainly expecting danger in the Mountainroot Temple. They're probably *not* expecting two competing factions.

No Exit

Perhaps the single most important feature of the Mountainroot is that nobody can leave. Because of the Caretaker's torment, the magical security has gone off-kilter. Anyone can *enter* the temple, but nobody can leave. Any attempt to do so, even by using teleportation, rebounds as though the individual has hit an invisible wall. (This is why the fey have not departed and why Zithiruun hasn't returned to Overlook.) The PCs can leave only by locating the Caretaker and assisting in his recovery.

Dungeon Features

Certain elements of the dungeon are universal throughout the complex.

Doors: Unless otherwise mentioned, none of the doors are locked and all can be opened by depressing a lever in the handle. Doors open inward, and so the hinges are in the room's interior.

Stairs: Stairs count as difficult terrain and are made from stone.

Extended Rest

Fortunately for the PCs, since they cannot depart, they have several areas in which they can safely rest. Once they have defeated the fey in M1, the broken corridors in the northeast are a safe place to camp. Areas A and F of M10 are safe, and once the PCs have dealt with the marching hammers and the trap, the rest of M10 is safe as well. Should the PCs try to sleep in M2, M3, or M4, they're attacked briefly by some of the fey from M5, who then retreat back to that area. Similarly, if the PCs try to sleep in M6, the forces from M9 might launch a few attacks.

Keep track of how much time the PCs spend resting; remember they're still on a deadline if they want to earn the most victory points.

Mountainroot Temple Overview

The temple includes the following areas.

M1: The Chamber of Doors

Numerous doors open up into a chamber that leads to other connected temples, and deeper into the Mountainroot.

Tactical Encounter: M1 The Chamber of Doors (page 50).

M2: Tea Room

Read the following:

A small round table and a few chairs occupy this otherwise empty chamber. Several cracked teacups and ale mugs, covered in dust and cobwebs, stand on the table where they were abandoned so long ago.

The secret door requires a DC 22 Perception check to locate. It is not locked, and it opens by depressing a hidden catch in the wall.

M3: Dining Room and Kitchen

Read the following:

Several long tables, capable of seating dozens, stretch the length of the room. Chairs are scattered about, some having been knocked over or broken just recently. A few humanoid corpses—small, with gray skin and wicked teeth—lie strewn about. Of whatever slew them, there's no sign.

These are the bodies of several quicklings who came out second-best against some of Zithiruun's trolls. The above description applies to M3A: The Dining Room. If the PCs enter M3B: The Kitchen, they find huge fire pits full of ash, large wooden counters with knife marks and meat stains, and a plethora of old brass tools and pots that are worth pretty much nothing.

The door in the east wall leads to M10, the area *beneath* M6.

M4: Wine Storage

Read the following:

Wooden racks line the walls, empty and dust-covered. From their size and shape, you'd guess that they once held bottles of wine and kegs of ale.

M5: The Vault

The vault is a multilevel room that contains storage for valuables behind heavy portcullises.

Tactical Encounter: M5 The Vault (page 52).

Questioning the Fallen

As with their enemies in the city, the PCs can learn much by interrogating survivors here in the temple. (Well, *some* of the survivors; any attempt to interrogate the trolls or the two-headed troll is likely met with an utter lack of anything useful or even intelligible.)

This interrogation is a level 10 skill challenge with a complexity of 2 and Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Insight as the primary skills. PCs can use Arcana, with an easy check, against any of the fey (to know that they are not behaving as normal fey of their type should). This doesn't qualify as a success, but it grants the PCs +2 bonuses to other checks in the challenge until their next failure. Similarly, a promise of freedom buys a +2 bonus to all such checks.

If the PCs succeed, the subject answers all their questions. If they fail, but with one or more successes, the subject answers a number of questions equal to the PCs successes, but at least one answer is a lie.

If the PCs wish, they can question dead foes by using the Speak with Dead ritual. In this case, use the "Dead Witness" skill challenge (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 78, as a level 10 skill challenge).

From the Fey . . .

The characters learn that the fey were sent "to this foul place" by someone they call Cachlain, the Stone-Skinned King. (Further questioning, or a DC 25 Arcana check, reveals that Cachlain is an infamous fomorian king of the Feywild.) He sent these fey in search of a valuable prize, which they refer to as "the parchment voice you call *Incunabulum Primeval*." They know that it is a tome of great power and that Cachlain has sought it for some time. Only recently, however, have they learned that its retrieval has become urgent, because the court's divinations suggested that someone else was about to get their hands on it. The fey admit that Cachlain's new counselor—someone named Sovacles, whom they have never met—tried to talk him out of sending them, but that the king was too desperate to get the book.

The fey admit that their group's leader, whom they call "Our Lady of the Deathly Song," already has the tome. (If the PCs are questioning Hethralga, the howling hag, she admits to having it on her person after a bit of hemming and hawing.) Alas, they cannot leave because "the Others"—a band of humanoids consisting mostly of trolls—appeared and took the Caretaker prisoner, thus cutting off all possible exit. "They are organized and serve some higher master," the fey muse, "but we know not who. Perhaps they are the reason Cachlain felt we must retrieve the parchment voice so swiftly."

If the PCs ask the fey what they want, they answer with, "Now? We seek only to escape the temple. A portal to the Feywild stands at the base of the mountains, where the waters flow from above to reach the plains. We would return home—with the *Incunabulum* if possible, but at least with our lives."

From the Soldiers of General Zithiruun . . .

The characters learn that, as with the thugs in Overlook, these are hired mercenaries. They can confirm the name "General Zithiruun," but also as with his minions in Overlook, the general has avoided showing his face to these soldiers, even as he worked and fought alongside them. They know he is humanoid and tall (for a human), but nothing more; his hood, cloak, and the combination armor-and-harness hide his features.

The soldiers admit that they *have* been instructed to look for the *Incunabulum Primeval*, but that the book is only a secondary objective. Zithiruun wants the temple. He intends to make use of its various magical portals to funnel soldiers into Overlook from elsewhere in the vale so that he can take the city in a combined attack from within and without. (This is why he wanted to keep people out of the Stone Anvil; he intends to use it as his assembly point for the soldiers who come through the portal.) Zithiruun seeks control over the entire western Elsir Vale, due to both its economic importance and because of the various portals that exist throughout it.

Overlook is about to face an attack from the soldiers Zithiruun has assembled throughout the vale. He gathered these soldiers slowly enough, and in small enough groups that they've utterly bypassed Bordrin's Watch—even if the PCs *do* stop him here! And it's happening in a matter of days!

They also admit that, as frustrated as Zithiruun was over Durkik's refusal to break, he has grown all but *enraged* that the Caretaker won't relinquish control over the temple's defenses, or even allow them to leave. He is keeping the Caretaker prisoner, and he has come near to torturing the fellow to death.

M6: The Grand Cathedral

The Grand Cathedral is an enormous central chamber with multiple levels. The room served as the heart of Moradin worship in the days that the temple still functioned.

Tactical Encounter: M6 The Grand Cathedral (page 54).

M7 and M8: The Shattered Barracks and the Lesser Sanctum

This portion of the temple, most thoroughly damaged by the ancient cave-ins, is currently the home camp for the invading fey.

Tactical Encounter: M7/M8 The Shattered Barracks and the Lesser Sanctum (page 58).

M9: The Reliquary

This peculiar chamber housed the greatest of the temple's religious treasures, as well as the astral portal through which Moradin's exarchs occasionally traveled. It includes a great many subchambers.

Tactical Encounter: M9 The Reliquary (page 61).

M10: The Underchambers

These rooms beneath the upper levels of M6 were the day-to-day living quarters of the priests.

Tactical Encounter: M10 The Underchambers (page 65).

Departing the Temple

Once the PCs have found the Caretaker in area M9I, they might at first be stunned—or even believe that they are being tricked—to find that he is no normal dwarf, but an azer! (*Monster Manual*, page 22; his stats should not prove necessary, but if they do, treat him as an azer foot soldier with the Ritual Caster feat and training in Arcana and Religion.) The PCs can free him from his shackles with a DC 22 Thievery check, but freeing his mind is something else entirely. The Caretaker has been subject to hideous tortures, and he's hovering on the brink of insanity.

A DC 17 Heal check reveals that a Remove Affliction ritual could set him right in the head again. Alternatively, the PCs can attempt to help him by using skills. Do *not* treat this as a skill challenge; rather, the PCs must make four skill checks against a DC of 21. One success must be with the Heal skill; the others can be Diplomacy, Heal, or Religion. Once they've achieved four successes, they bring the Caretaker back from the brink of insanity. Each attempt, regardless of which skill is being used, takes 15 minutes, so even four straight successes requires a full hour.

Incidentally, should the PCs ask, the Caretaker has no other name; he abandoned it when he assumed this duty and answers to nothing else.

Once the PCs succeed, read the following:

The azer blinks once, and when he looks at you again, his eyes are clear—or rather, they appear to burn with an inner fire that they lacked earlier. He speaks in heavily accented Common. "You have my thanks, strangers. You should not be here, but as you are—and as I needed you—I will take this to be Moradin's will. I know not who these creatures were, who invaded my home and dealt so cruelly with me, but I know their intentions! I heard them plan! They seek to attack the city of Overlook, from both without and—through my temple—within! Even though the latter has been thwarted, the former might yet lie ahead; Overlook, and indeed Elsir Vale, might suffer greatly. But tell me, who are these villains? Do you know? Tell me all that has happened, please."

Assuming the PCs are at least vaguely forthcoming, the Caretaker listens, shaking his head sadly.

"I knew that the tall one wanted me to turn over stewardship of the temple to him," he says. "I fear that, in my pain, I might indeed have granted him control over some of the constructs, but I denied him any more than

that. I . . . I fear that when you awoke me from my stupor, the portals were instantly unbarred. He has likely fled already. But at least I can swiftly return you to Overlook the same way."

If the PCs ask him about the *Incunabulum*, he reluctantly agrees to let them take it if they swear that they indeed intend to turn it over to Moradin's church.

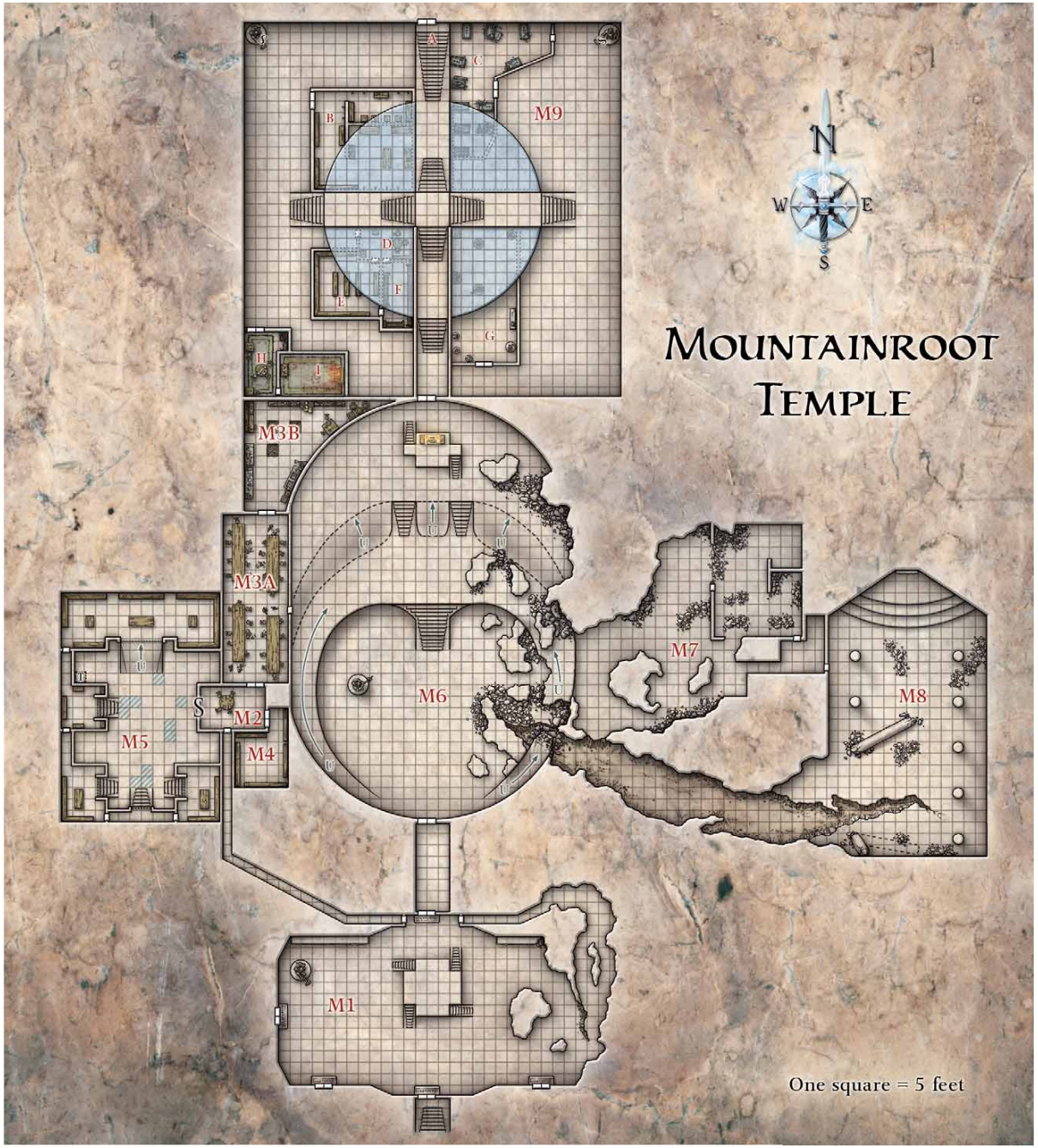
As they are preparing to leave, however, read the following:

"I realize time is short," he tells you, "and that you must hurry back to warn the people of Overlook. Nevertheless, I must ask you . . . can you spare an hour, and perhaps a bit of your hard-won gains, to aid me with one final task? After the blood that was shed here, I must perform a ritual to reconsecrate the temple to Moradin. I cannot do it alone, and if you do not aid me, I will have to walk several miles through the mountains to find assistance at Bordrin's Watch. Perhaps this sounds to you like the ramblings of an old fool, but I believe fully that Moradin will smile upon us for doing so."

If the PCs agree, they need not make any rolls; the Caretaker is casting the ritual, while they assist. They do, however, have to provide 500 gp worth of precious metals that the ritual requires. They might feel as though they're wasting time and money both, but indeed, reconsecrating the temple *does* aid them in their struggles to come. (See "Victory Points," page 37).

When they complete the ritual, read the following:

For just an instant, as the last echoes of the rite fade away, the entire room grows ever so slightly warmer, as though heated from within by the fires of a small forge. The faint chime of hammers on steel reverberates from all around you, and then once more there is silence.



In addition, PCs who think quickly can provide even more aid to the city. Although he won't think of it himself—he's been through too much, and still isn't thinking clearly—the Caretaker can make the walk to Bordrin's Watch and request aid for the coming battle at Overlook. If a player suggests this, additional dwarves arrive in time to aid in the city's defense, and the PCs earn additional victory points.

Once these tasks are complete (or the PCs choose not to complete them at all), they can return to Overlook by using the Stone Anvil and bring warning of what's to come to the Council of Elders.

The Incunabulum Primeval

When the PCs finally get their hands on this tome, they find it to be an enormous book, nearly 2 feet tall by 18 inches wide, and almost a foot thick. The pages are an incredibly heavy parchment, while the cover consists of thin planks of wood that are bound and hinged in iron.

The book is written in Dwarven, but also in a sort of cipher; no attempt at translating or decoding it functions without either the proper rituals, known only to the priesthood of Moradin, or magic more potent than any the PCs currently possess.

The *Incunabulum* indeed has great powers, of which the PCs might see the slightest hint during the siege of Overlook, but any more detailed familiarity with this potent item must wait for future adventures.

Part Three: The Taking of Overlook

The endgame is upon the PCs now—not only of Zithiruun's plans, but the heroic tier, and the first third of the Scales of War. And that endgame is nothing less than the siege of Overlook. Zithiruun's plans to funnel a "fifth column" into the heart of the city might have been thwarted, but his mercenary armies throughout the Vale still pose a deadly threat. The PCs are not Overlook's *only* defenders, but at this point they're the most potent and the most important.

Victory Points

As with some prior Dungeons & Dragons adventures, "The Temple Between" makes use of a victory point system to help determine the outcome of the siege. Throughout the adventure so far, and indeed on into the siege, the PCs can accomplish certain goals that ultimately determine how well Overlook stands up to the attack. Once the adventure is concluded with the defeat (or victory) of Zithiruun, consult the table below to determine how many victory points the PCs have earned. The "Concluding the Adventure" section tells you how to interpret those points.

In addition, some entries on the table include a read-aloud description. Insert these at various points throughout the days of the siege, wherever they are most appropriate, as hints to the PCs that their prior actions have indeed proved effective and are aiding them now.

Wartime Urban Encounters

During the siege, the PCs might have several extra encounters. This option exists in case the PCs have missed enough encounters or skill challenges that you don't think they'll make 11th level by the end of the adventure. Be careful, however, not to use too many of these encounters (or even any) if the PCs appear to be on track. Although you want them to achieve 11th level, you do *not* want them to do so before encountering Zithiruun.

Enemy Soldiers (Level 9; XP 2,200)

- 2 dragonborn gladiators (level 10 soldier; *MM* 86 or encounter T5)
- 3 trolls (level 9 brute; *MM* 254 or encounter T3)

More Death from Above (Level 10; XP 2,500)

- berbalang (level 10 solo skirmisher; *MM* 34 or encounter T2)

Traitors Within (Level 9; XP 2,250)

- 1 of the surviving possessed citizens (level 10 soldier; encounter C9)
- 3 doppelganger assassins (level 8 lurker; *MM* 71 or encounter C9)
- 5 streetwise thugs (level 9 minion; encounter C9)

Looters (Level 8; XP 1,800)

- 18 streetwise thugs (level 9 minion; encounter C9)

Victory Point Accumulation		
If the PCs...	**They earn . . .**	**Read-Aloud**
Rescue Durkik alive*	1	"As you race through the city toward your next objective, you notice a squad of soldiers standing victorious over a band of defeated trolls. Durkik stands beside them, his hands flickering with holy fire."
Kill or defeat Captain Aerun	1	–
Complete their adventures in the Mountainroot Temple and return to Overlook within 5 days of first arriving in Overlook	3	"Although the sentries fearfully report a large force of trolls and other creatures approaching the gates, the army sounds smaller than you feared. Perhaps Zithiruun wasn't able to assemble as many troops as he'd hoped."
Assist the Caretaker in casting the ritual	2	"For just an instant, as you face your enemies, you once again feel a faint warmth, as of a forge fire, and hear the distant sound of chiming hammers. Your spirits soar with Moradin's blessing."
Send the Caretaker to Bordrin's Watch for help	2	"A cheer arises from the sentries atop the wall, as a force of several hundred dwarves appears on the western horizon, striking at the enemy from behind."
Return the *Incunabulum* to Durkik or Karros	1	"Farther down the street, you spot a team of dwarves wearing the holy hammer of Moradin. They are charging unharmed through a burning building to reach a band of mercenaries threatening civilians. Standing behind them, Durkik (or Karros) chants passages from the *Incunabulum*."
Succeed in the skill challenge to aid the Council in formulating defensive strategies	2	–
Defeat the berbalang at encounter T2	1	–
Defeat the enemies at encounter T3	2	–
Defeat Zithiruun at encounter T5	3	–
*If the PCs used their own magic and resources to resurrect Durkik, they earn these points as well.		

The Battle for the City: Day One

The PCs emerge from the Stone Anvil to a welcoming committee of several Overlook soldiers. "The Council of Elders needs to speak with you immediately," the squad's commander tells the PCs. "Please come with me."

Read the following:

Through the streets of Overlook and the gates of the mighty Caer Overlook, the soldiers escort you, until finally you have reached the imposing doors of the High Hall. Standing on the dais in the center of the chamber are three of the Council's five members, as well as several more soldiers and High Priest Durkik Forgeheart.

Upon seeing you, Great Elder Morgoff Stonefirst waves at you, not to speak to them from below, but to join them upon the dais!

Once the PCs are on the dais, read:

"I was hoping to wait until all our members were present," he tells you without preamble, "but we've still not heard from Elders Itrika Mountainhome or Olman Sledgemore—they are, presumably, occupied with other duties and our messengers haven't reached them to tell them of this emergency conclave—and we've no more time to wait. High Ancestor Durkik, as well as several other citizens, such as Priestess Lavinya, have told us a bit of what's been happening our city. But I'm given to understand that you can tell us far more. Please, what's going on? Is Overlook in danger?

Obviously, if Durkik is dead, replace the prior references, and all subsequent references, with Ancestor Karros.

SC3. Council of War

Once the PCs tell the Council what has happened, and what is to come, Great Elder Morgoff asks them, as well as the guard officers and Durkik, to adjourn with the Council to the war room, where they can discuss defenses. On the way, Durkik moves to the PCs and asks, softly and almost reverently, if they've recovered the *Incunabulum Primeval*. If they give it to him, his eyes tear up, and he immediately hands the party a small pouch of platinum and gold coins equaling their promised reward.

Skill Challenge: SC3 Council of War (page 67).

The Battle for the City: Day Two

Over the course of the night, a small but fearsome mercenary army—consisting mostly of human soldiers and trolls, but with dragonborn and other creatures scattered throughout—creeps from the surrounding wilds and surrounds Overlook. The PCs awaken in the morning to the sound of catapult boulders slamming against the ramparts, and are swiftly summoned to the Council's war room.

The following three encounters can occur in whatever order you prefer. They are written as assignments from the Council, but if you'd rather have the PCs stumble upon them while out and about, that's fine, too.

Other battles and events take place over the course of this day and into the night, but unless you wish to add some of the extra encounters previously described, the following are the only ones to involve the PCs directly.

T2: Death From Above

Read the following:

As you stand in the war room, discussing tactics, a messenger barges in and drops to one knee, panting, at Great Elder Morgoff's feet.

"My apologies for interrupting," he gasps, "but Nine Bells is burning! A creature—gods, I've never seen anything like them—they're flying over the district and dropping alchemical fire bombs! The local soldiers are dealing with some of them, but there are just too many!"

Unless the PCs, for some bizarre reason, refuse to go investigate, proceed to the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: T2 Death From Above (page 68).

T3: Hold the Gate!

Either back at Caer Overlook or while out in the streets, a military courier catches up with the PCs. "The outer wall!" he shouts at them. "They've breached the outer wall, just north of the west gate!"

Tactical Encounter: T3 Hold the Wall! (page 70).

SC4: Combing the Wreckage

The PCs need to find one of the city councilmembers before she's killed by the attackers.

Skill Challenge: SC4 Combing the Wreckage (page 72).

The Battle for the City: Day Three

The PCs face only one major encounter on the third day—which is fine, because they're going to need everything they have to win.

T5: The Final Encounter

Read the following:

Even as you rise from a night of troubled, martial dreams, a knock sounds on your chamber door. High Ancestor Durkik stands outside, looking grim.

"I bring word from Councilor Morgoff. In the late hours of the night, a squadron of soldiers was dispatched to investigate reports of enemies in the streets close to Caer Overlook. None have returned. As soon as you've risen and readied yourself, I'm to show you on the map where they were assigned, and ask you to investigate."

Tactical Encounter: T5 The Final Encounter (page 73).

Concluding the Adventure

Once word of Zithiruun's death spreads through the invaders, they gradually break off and retreat back into the wild. Most are mercenaries, after all, and there's little point in fighting on behalf of someone who's too dead to pay. (If the PCs attempt to question Zithiruun—or his corpse—treat it as an interrogation skill challenge, as per his soldiers in the Mountainroot Temple, but at 14th level. He can explain that the githyanki wanted the region for its various portals, and that the assignment came down from officers above him, but he knows nothing about who originated it or why it was happening now. These are details for a future adventure.)

But for now, the PCs have learned that the githyanki are behind at least some of the troubles that have beset Elsir Vale, and they can be content in the knowledge that they've defeated one of their major enemies and saved Overlook.

Or at least, they've *probably* saved it.

Victory Point Totals

How well the PCs did—and how well Overlook survives—depends on their total number of victory points. (Future adventures in the Scales of War adventure path assume that the PCs achieved at least 13 victory points. If this is not the case in your campaign, you can either modify future adventures to make use of different NPCs than those who died here, or you can arrange to have these NPCs resurrected "behind the scenes."

6 or fewer: If the PCs did this poorly, Overlook has likely either been conquered, or razed to the point where it requires almost complete rebuilding. The PCs gain no XP or monetary reward for the "Prevent the Fall of Overlook" quest. You'll have to modify future adventures in the Scales of War to account for the city's destruction—but then again, it's almost impossible for the PCs to have done this poorly without dying, so odds are you have other alterations to make anyway.

7 to 12: Overlook is severely damaged, but not to the point of destruction. The PCs earn 1,500 XP and 3,000 gp as reward for the "Prevent the Fall of Overlook" quest; the Council of Elders cannot afford to spare any more money from the reconstruction effort.

Lavinya and Durkik, alas, did not survive the city's final battles, though they gave their lives fighting for their homes and their neighbors. Any alliances the PCs might have established with them will have to be reforged with new NPCs.

The PCs are heroes of the city, but nobody has the time to honor them; in fact, the PCs are probably put to work with the rebuilding. Still, Overlook remains, and things have returned to at least some semblance of normal by the time the next adventure in the Scales of War begins.

13 or more: Overlook has weathered the storm, and though damaged, the city stands tall and proud. The PCs are hailed as great heroes, and several different establishments offer them free room and board for several months. The PCs gain 2,500 XP and 7,000 gp as rewards for the "Prevent the Fall of Overlook" quest, and they are invited to dine with the Council of Elders several times over the next few weeks.

Lavinya abandons the temple and instead takes over Haelyn's duties at the shrine. "If this is where the people wish to pray," she tells the PCs, "then who am I to tell them otherwise? Erathis needs no stone walls, merely the hearts and souls of those who would bring civilization and culture to the world. Haelyn understood this long ago," she adds with a sad smile. "I wish I'd not taken so long to learn it myself."

Durkik, if he survived, has experienced a reawakening of faith. His time of confinement and torture, followed by his rescue at the hands of the PCs and his survival of the siege, have caused him to reevaluate the previous years. From a beaten-down, tired, and increasingly corrupt politician, he returns to his younger identity as a devout priest of Moradin. In helping to turn him around, the PCs have gained a grateful and powerful ally, and they have done great good to the religious community of Overlook as a whole. This is particularly important, considering that the high priests of other temples were suborned by the githyanki, and their replacements are all younger and inexperienced. Over the next months, Durkik emerges as a spiritual leader for the entire city.

And thus does the curtain fall on the PCs' heroic tier. Greater dangers and challenges await, as those behind the githyanki's efforts plot their vengeance and advance schemes of which the heroes have not yet learned. But for now, at least, the PCs have earned a few weeks of rest and the acclaim of Overlook's citizenry.

C4/C5: The Shrine of Erathis and Haelyn's Home

Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP)

Setup

2 doppelganger assassins (D)
Grovald, human priest (G)
5 streetwise thugs (S)

The shrine of Erathis is currently under the auspices of Grovald, Haelyn's "replacement." He dwells here, with a number of hired guards who spend the days lurking in Grovald's shack (C4A).

None of these individuals are present at first if the PCs appear at night. Grant them five minutes to search the grounds as they see fit before their enemies arrive. Use the positions marked in RED if the PCs are in the shrine when the enemies appear; those marked in GREEN if the PCs are in or near the fountain, or in cottage C5; and those marked in BLUE if the PCs are in cottage C4A.

The doppelgangers appear as humans, though dressed in darker clothes than the other thugs.

When the enemies first appear, read:

From the darkness, an arrogant voice says, "I'm just as glad you chose to come here at night. It makes things so much neater when we need not involve the authorities, don't you think?" You see a bald, sharp-faced man in dark clothes all but fading into the shadows, and movement comes from several other individuals in the night around him.

Perception Check
DC 24: *Two other individuals, cloaked in darker hues than the rest, lurk around corners or in pools of shadow.*

When a doppelganger assassin is slain, read:

The body at your feet warps and shifts, the skin turning pale gray, the eyes growing wide and dark. This is no human who lies before you!

When the PCs enter C4, read:

This cottage—more of a hut—is no more enticing inside than out. An old, rickety table and chair stand beside an ash- and charcoal-filled fireplace, and a door, standing slightly ajar, reveals what appears to be an equally cheap bed beyond.

Perception Check
DC 20: *A scrap of parchment, only partly burned, lies in the ashes of the fireplace.*

The Note

The PCs have found an important clue in this scrap, even though much of it has been burned away. The legible portions read as follows:

. . . unreachable for a time, as I must . . . the priests' orders as you would my own, for he . . . s always, be certain you destroy this mis . . .
. . . eneral Zi . . .

Features of the Area

Illumination: Several lanterns, hanging on the posts that support the fabric "tent," cast their light over the area. The bulk of the area is brightly lit, but the interiors of the buildings marked C4A and C5 are dimly lit.

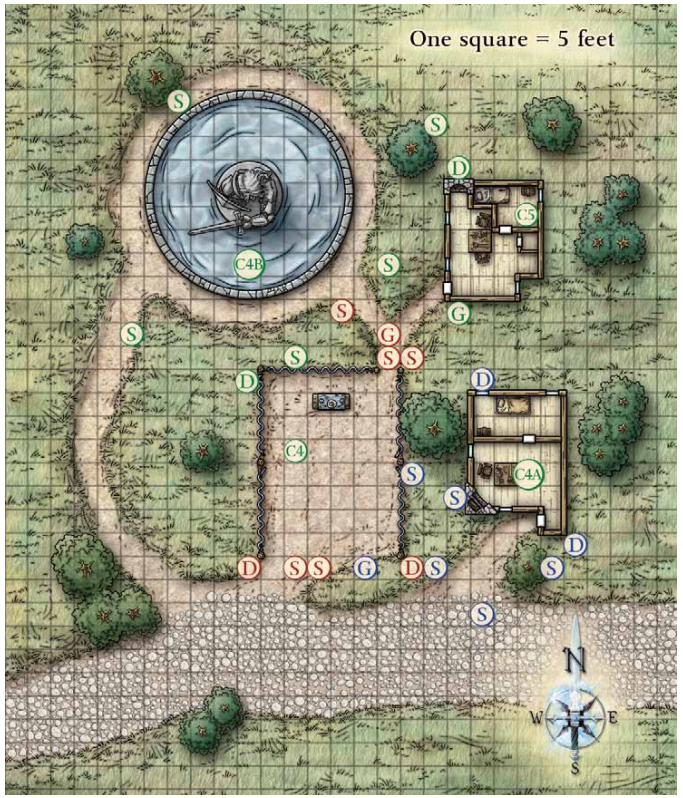
Ceiling: The bulk of the shrine is outdoors. The shacks (C4A and C5) have 8-foot ceilings, and the fabric roof of the shrine is 10 feet overhead.

Beds, Chests, and Tables: Each of these can provide cover. Creatures can step up onto the furniture; this costs an extra square of movement.

Chairs: The chairs are not sufficient to provide cover, but a character can step up onto one with an extra square of movement, or use one as a makeshift weapon.

Doors: The outer doors of the two shacks are locked (DC 18 Thievery to open). The inner doors are not locked.

Fabric Curtains: The curtains that make up the covering of the shrine block line of sight. Pushing through or past them costs an extra square of movement.



Fireplaces: Both fireplaces hold ashes and charcoal. A character can move into the fireplace (though a Medium character has to squeeze; see *Player's Handbook*, page 292). Climbing up the inside of the chimney requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Pantry: The pantry in C5 provides cover.

Pool: The water in the pool is not deep enough to swim in. It qualifies as difficult terrain.

If the PCs conduct a thorough search of the fountain, *and* make a DC 19 Perception Check, read:

Behind the fountain, not far from the nearest tree, a faint bulge in the earth mars the contours of the soil. It looks as though something was buried here recently.

If the PCs dig here, they find Haelyn's dead body.

Statue: The large statue of Erathis in the pool's center provides cover, and it can be climbed with a DC 12 Athletics check.

Trees: The trees provide cover and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Most are only between 10 and 20 feet (2 to 4 squares) high.

5 Streetwise Thugs (S) **Level 9 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 100 each

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 6 damage.

⊕ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +13 vs. AC; 6 damage.

Murder is a Team Sport
If a streetwise thug is flanking an enemy, it deals 1 extra point of damage per ally adjacent to the flanked enemy (including the ally who is granting the flank), to a maximum of +4.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +11, Thievery +8

Str 16 (+7)	**Dex** 12 (+5)	**Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 15 (+6)	**Int** 9 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+4)

Equipment leather armor, crossbow, longsword, case with 20 bolts

2 Doppelganger Assassins (D) **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 350 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 69; **Bloodied** 34
AC 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21
Speed 6

⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.

⊕ **Hand Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +13 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.

Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)
+11 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger assassin gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger assassin's next turn.

Cloud Mind (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Charm**
Close burst 5; +11 vs. Will; the doppelganger assassin is invisible to the target. Affected targets are unable to see the doppelganger for as long as it sustains the effect, until the doppelganger attacks, or until it is hit by an attack.

Combat Advantage
The doppelganger assassin deals 2d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, *Monster Manual* page 280).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +15, Insight +12, Stealth +14

Str 12 (+5)	**Dex** 21 (+9)	**Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 15 (+6)	**Int** 13 (+5)	**Cha** 19 (+8)

Equipment dagger, hand crossbow, case with 20 bolts

Grovald (G) **Level 9 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9
Unhallowed Resilience aura 3; when allies enter the aura or start their turns there, they gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws.
HP 194; **Bloodied** 97
AC 25; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5
Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force, Weapon**
+13 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 force damage and push 3.

⊕ **Phantom Spear** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Ranged 12; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Grovald's next turn.

Twin Spears (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Grovald makes two *phantom spear* attacks.

Phantom Spikes (standard; sustain minor; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Force, Zone**
Area burst 1 within 15; +13 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 5 force damage. *Aftereffect:* Any enemy that begins its turn in the area takes 5 force damage, and Grovald's enemies treat the zone as difficult terrain. Grovald can sustain or dismiss the zone as a minor action.

Phantom Riposte (immediate reaction when hit or missed by a melee attack; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Grovald makes an immediate *phantom spear* attack against the triggering enemy. This use of *phantom spear* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Religion +12

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 12 (+5)	**Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 16 (+7)	**Cha** 14 (+6)

Equipment chainmail, longsword

Tactics

Since Grovald's area attack affects enemies only, he stays in the back and lobs area and ranged powers, trying to weaken the PCs fast and impair their ability to maneuver. The thugs make straightforward attacks, while the doppelgangers move around the combat, working to flank or otherwise gain combat advantage. Everyone involved fights to the end.

C7: Alley Ambush

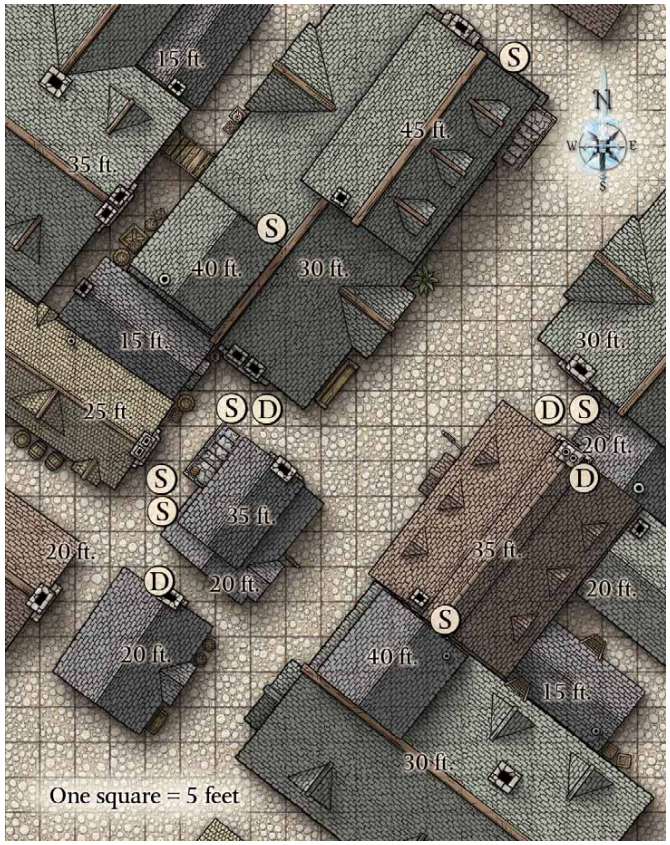
Encounter Level 9 (2,100 XP)

Setup

4 doppelganger assassins (D)
7 streetwise thugs (S)

The conspirators have learned that the PCs are investigating them, and they want the party dead. A band of cutthroats ambushes the PCs in an alley or on a street corner somewhere.

Once again, the doppelgangers begin the encounter in human form.



When the attack begins, read:

Without warning, a number of thugs come charging from around corners and out of doorways, and they hold their blades high!

Perception Check
DC 24: *A handful of other attackers, clad in black, blend into the shadows, but you spot them coming.*

When a doppelganger assassin is slain, read:

The body at your feet warps and shifts—the skin turns pale gray and the eyes grow wide and dark. This is no human who lies before you!

4 Doppelganger Assassins (D)	**Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 350 each
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10	
HP 69; **Bloodied** 34	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	
Speed 6	
Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 10/20; +13 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.	
Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)	
+11 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger assassin gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger assassin's next turn.	
Cloud Mind (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Charm**	
Close burst 5; +11 vs. Will; the doppelganger assassin is invisible to the target. Affected targets are unable to see the doppelganger for as long as it sustains the effect, until the doppelganger attacks, or until it is hit by an attack.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger assassin deals 2d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, *Monster Manual* page 280).	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Bluff +15, Insight +12, Stealth +14	
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+5)	
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)	
Equipment dagger, hand crossbow, case with 20 bolts	

7 Streetwise Thugs (S)	**Level 9 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 100 each
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16	
Speed 6	
Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+14 vs. AC; 6 damage.	
Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 15/30; +13 vs. AC; 6 damage.	
Murder is a Team Sport	
If a streetwise thug is flanking an enemy, it deals 1 extra point of damage per ally adjacent to the flanked enemy (including the ally who is granting the flank), to a maximum of +4.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Athletics +11, Thievery +8	
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+4)	
Equipment leather armor, crossbow, longsword, case with 20 bolts	

Tactics

The combat is straightforward. The thugs attack en masse, while the doppelgangers flit in and out of shadows or flank the PCs, trying for combat advantage.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The lighting here is dependent entirely on the time: brightly lit by the sun during the day or dimly lit by distant street-side lanterns at night.

Buildings: The buildings here range from two to four stories (figure 4 to 8 squares) in height. The walls can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check.

The List: If the PCs search the bodies, they find on one of the doppelgangers a list of descriptions—of the PCs themselves! The parchment is stained with something which (with a DC 16 Perception check) appears to be beer and sausage grease. A DC 17 Streetwise check suggests that the source for the stain is the Pig and Bucket tavern.

SC1: Catching Durkik

Encounter Level 9 (1,200 XP)

Setup

Begin by reading the following:

After some time waiting, when the city is fully cloaked in the shadows of night, your quarry finally emerges. Glancing around, he turns and begins walking at a swift but inconspicuous pace.

If the PCs are following Durkik in specific, continue with:

Durkik ducks into an alley after walking a few blocks. Mere seconds later, another dwarf—slightly taller, with different hair and beard—emerges onto the street. You wouldn't even have noticed had you not been specifically watching, but much of his outfit appears to match Durkik's own, and his posture as he walks is identical.

If the PCs glance into the alley as they pass, they can confirm that neither Durkik, nor anyone else, remains within it. They've just witnessed the doppelganger who has taken Durkik's place alter his form, hoping to make himself less noticeable.

At this point, regardless of who they're following, begin the skill challenge.

Catching Durkik **Level 9**
Skill Challenge XP 1,200

You make your way as silently through the streets of Overlook as you can, attempting to keep Durkik in sight without alerting him to your presence.

The party attempts to shadow their target through the city.

Complexity

3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Perception, Stealth, Streetwise.

Victory

If the PCs succeed with 0 failures, they reach the warehouse without being detected. Only half their potential enemies are present (run the scene as two separate combat encounters, as described in the tactical encounter), and the PCs gain a surprise round when they arrive.

Partial Victory

If the PCs succeed with 1 failure, they're detected only at the last minute. Only half their potential enemies are present (run the scene as two separate encounters, as described in the tactical encounter), but the enemies are not surprised.

If the PCs succeed with 2 failures, they're detected as they near the warehouse. They face the entire complement of enemies (run the scene as a single 12th-level encounter), and the enemy is not surprised.

Defeat

The PCs are detected, and their quarry shakes them as he nears the warehouse. The PCs know the general area to which their target went, but not the specific building. They eventually find the warehouse, but it takes 2d6 hours of wandering, searching, and perhaps various bribes or Diplomacy and Streetwise checks made to the merchants and citizens of the area. The result is that not only must they face the entire complement of enemies (a single 12th-level encounter), but they've lost a great deal of time off their deadline. (See "Victory Points," page 37.)

Special If at least one member of the party is capable of turning invisible, the party gains 1 success automatically.

Acrobatics (DC 16)

Any given character can attempt Acrobatics only once in this fashion, whether he or she succeeds or fails, and a failure costs the PC a healing surge as well as counting as a failure. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

The PC darts around a corner, tumbles over a gap between rooftops, or otherwise stays near the quarry at an angle that makes the PC harder to detect.

Athletics (DC 16)

Any given character can attempt Athletics only once in this fashion, whether the PC succeeds or fails, and a failure costs the PC a healing surge as well as counting as a failure. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

Much like Acrobatics, the PC climbs walls, leaps between roofs or balconies, and otherwise follows by staying out of direct line of sight.

Perception (DC 20)

This does not qualify as a success, but succeeding on this check grants the party a +2 bonus to all further checks in this challenge until someone fails a check.

The PC carefully watches the target to keep him in view even from a distance or behind other people on the street.

Stealth (DC 20)

A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

Darting behind pedestrians, into doorways, and through shadows, you move street to street without being seen.

Streetwise (DC 24)

A successful check counts as two successes. Once made, the characters cannot use Streetwise again for this skill challenge.

By using knowledge of Overlook's seedier areas, the PC can anticipate where the quarry is going.

Other Methods

If the PCs can't (or don't think to) follow Durkik or Aerun, they have other ways to find out what they need to know. If they can catch Durkik alone, they can attempt to interrogate him, as described previously.

If they successfully interrogate him, Durkik can tell the PCs where the warehouse is. He also reveals all the information presented in the "Interrogating the Conspirators" sidebar, below.

Because the false Durkik didn't show up at the warehouse, the forces there are ready for trouble. Run the scenario as a 12th-level encounter, and the enemy cannot be surprised.

C9: The Warehouse

Encounter Level 12 (3,250 XP) or
Encounter Level 8 (1,700 XP) and
Encounter Level 8 (1,550 XP)

Setup

3 doppelganger assassins (D)
2 possessed citizens (P)
12 streetwise thugs (S)
Or
First encounter (use RED placements)
2 doppelganger assassins (D)
1 possessed citizen (P)
5 streetwise thugs (S)
And
Second encounter (do not use the marks on the map since these enemies enter through one or two of the doors and position themselves based on the PCs' actions)
1 doppelganger assassin
1 possessed citizen
7 streetwise thugs
This warehouse has long been used by one of the criminal elements of Overlook as a headquarters, a central depot for illegal goods, and an occasional hideout. It has since been taken over by General Zithiruun's conspiracy.

Any creature on the map placed on the catwalk is *on* the catwalk; no enemies begin directly beneath it.

If the PCs enter on the ground floor, read:

A vast chamber stretches before you. Rows upon rows of crates—some stacked as high as 15 feet—form aisles and corridors. A catwalk runs around the perimeter, as well as across the cavernous room at several points, with an array of chains and pulleys dangling beneath.

If the PCs are in a position to see the office and balcony, read:

In one corner, a flight of stairs leads to a balcony built into the catwalk. Several walls surround what you would guess to be an office or counting house.

Perception Check
DC 13: *Several gruff-looking fellows, the sort you might not want to meet in a dark alley but wouldn't be surprised to find there, lurk atop the catwalk, atop several crates, and around a few corners, crossbows held at the ready.*
DC 24: *A few other foes stand hiding in the shadows, also aiming weapons your way. Their gray flesh and huge dark eyes are strong indications that they're not human!*

If the PCs somehow prevented Aerun from getting here, refer to one of the possessed priests instead in the text below this. If they haven't met Aerun, describe him as the officer from the wall when they first arrived.

If the PCs enter by the office door, read:

You are in a small counting house, which is occupied by little more than a table, a chair—and Captain Aerun, shock evident on his face as he rises. The wall behind him boasts a shuttered, glass-free window.

Tactics

The doppelgangers and thugs initially launch volleys of crossbow bolts at the PCs, using the crates as cover. They keep moving, almost never staying in the same spot from round to round. The thugs prefer to close on the PCs in groups, but do so by maneuvering around and atop crates; they know better than to make a beeline for the enemy in an open corridor. The doppelgangers make use of similar tactics, but switch constantly from melee to range and back again. The possessed citizens use their *telekinetic leap* to obtain an optimal position, and then maintain melee combat.

If the PCs enter through the office, the githyanki-possessed citizen takes his first move to fly out the window into the main warehouse, so as not to face the PCs alone.

The possessed citizens fight to the death. If two of the doppelgangers and over half the thugs are slain, the remainder attempt to flee.

1, 2, or 3 Doppelganger Assassins (D)	**Level 8 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 350 each
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10	
HP 69; **Bloodied** 34	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	
Speed 6	
ⓘ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
ⓘ **Hand Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 10/20; +13 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.	
⸸ **Shapeshifter Feint** (minor; at-will)	
+11 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger assassin gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger assassin's next turn.	
✧ **Cloud Mind** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Charm**	
Close burst 5; +11 vs. Will; the doppelganger assassin is invisible to the target. Affected targets are unable to see the doppelganger for as long as it sustains the effect, until the doppelganger attacks, or until it is hit by an attack.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger assassin deals 2d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, *Monster Manual* page 280).	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Bluff +15, Insight +12, Stealth +14	
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+5)	
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 13 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+8)	
Equipment dagger, hand crossbow, case with 20 bolts	

1 or 2 Possessed Citizens (P)	Level 10 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500 each
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 101; **Bloodied** 50	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*	
⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4, plus 3d6 extra psychic damage if the target is immobilized, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against the immobilized condition until the start of the possessed citizen's next turn.	
⊹ **Telekinetic Grasp** (standard; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the possessed citizen can fly 5 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills History +11, Insight +11	
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+6)	
Con 13 (+6) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)	
Equipment leather armor, greatsword	

5, 7, or 12 Streetwise Thugs (S)	Level 9 Minion
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 100 each
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+14 vs. AC; 6 damage.	
⊹ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 15/30; +13 vs. AC; 6 damage.	
Murder is a Team Sport	
If a streetwise thug is flanking an enemy, it deals 1 extra point of damage per ally adjacent to the flanked enemy (including the ally who is granting the flank), to a maximum of +4.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Athletics +11, Thievery +8	
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+4)	
Equipment leather armor, crossbow, longsword, case with 20 bolts	

If the fight is divided into two encounters (see the rules for the Heart of the Conspiracy skill challenge, page 30), the second group arrives 1d4 + 4 minutes after the first battle ends. Unless a member of the first group escaped, they all enter through the office and the PCs can ambush them, thus gaining surprise. If someone *did* escape the first encounter, this second group has been warned, and they split up, entering by both the office and the door. They are ready for trouble and cannot be surprised.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The warehouse is brightly illuminated by a sequence of lanterns and sunrods placed along the railing of the catwalk.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 35 feet overhead.

Catwalks: These metallic walkways, standing 20 feet above the floor, aid in the movement and placement of crates. A sequence of chains and pulleys runs across the underside of the catwalks. This enables a character to climb, hand-over-hand, along the underside of these catwalks with a DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics check, at normal climbing speed.

Except where the ladders stand, the catwalk has a railing all the way around. Anyone wishing to deliberately climb or leap over the railing must spend an extra square of movement to do so, and any push, pull, or slide effect that would drag a creature over that railing must also spend an extra square to do so.

Chair: The chair is not sufficient to provide cover, but a character can step up onto it with an extra square of movement or use it as a makeshift weapon.

Crates: Each individual crate is roughly 5 feet (1 square) high, but they are often stacked two or three crates (that is, 10 or 15 feet, or 2 or 3 squares) in height, as marked on the map. Stepping up on a single crate requires an extra square of movement, while moving *down* a single crate does not cost any additional movement. Climbing two or three crates requires a DC 20 Athletics check.

Doors: The central door slides upward into the ceiling. It isn't locked, but it *cannot* be opened stealthily, since the chains and pulleys rumble. The two side doors are both locked, and require a DC 19 Thievery check to open.

Ladders: The ladders are all 20 feet (4 squares) in height, but count as 6 squares of movement. A DC 12 Acrobatics or Athletics check allows a character to climb them at the normal 4 squares of movement.

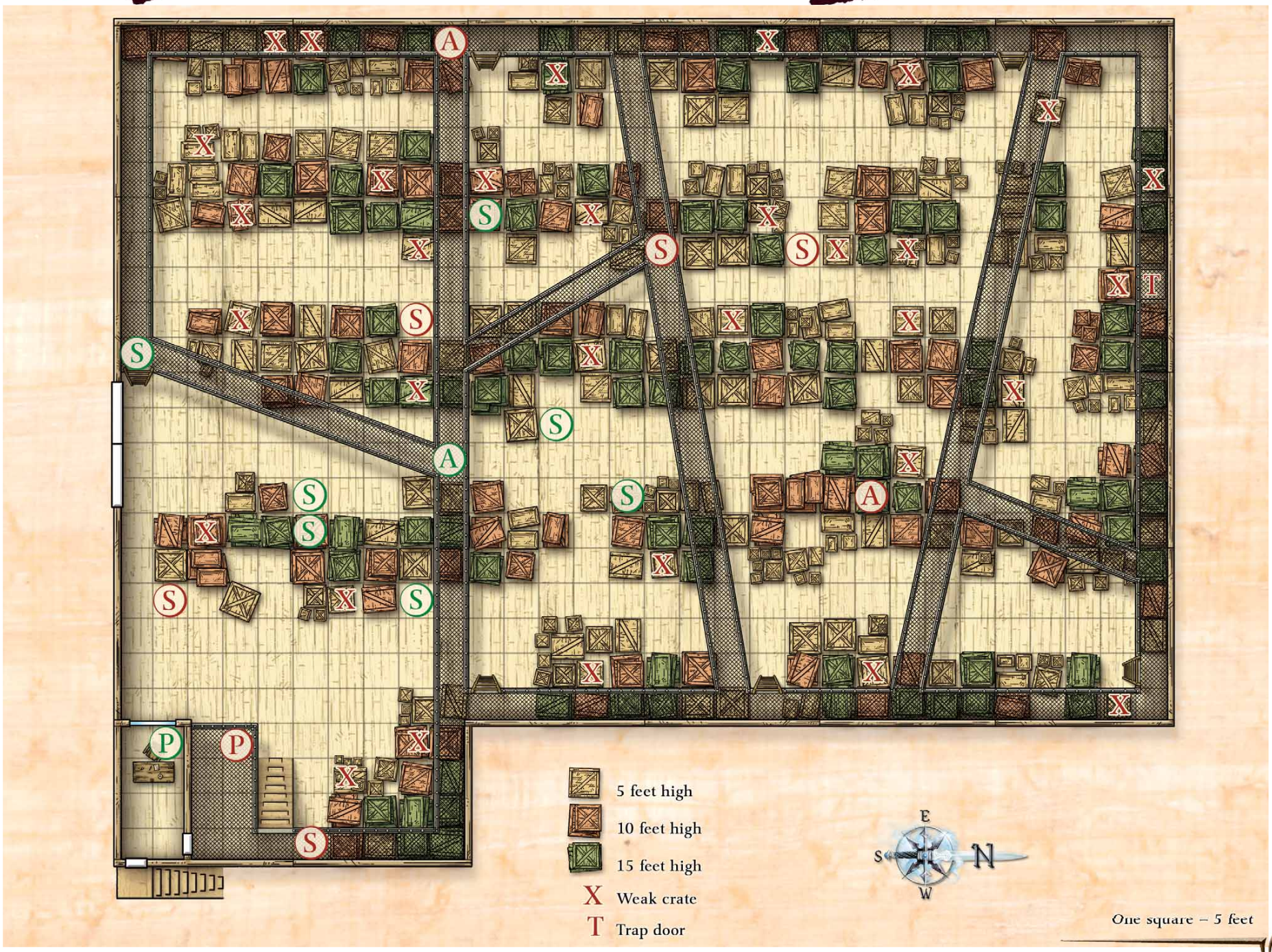
Stairs: The stairs count as difficult terrain.

Table: A character can step up onto the table with an extra square of movement. A DC 19 Strength check topples the table over, allowing it to serve as cover and knocking prone any creatures standing on it.

Trapdoor: The trapdoor requires a DC 21 Thievery check to open. The ladder beneath leads to an underground passage (unmapped) that itself leads to the cell (C9A) containing High Priest Durkik.

Weakened Crates: Several of the crates, as marked on the map, are weaker than others. A creature that moves atop that crate partially breaks through the wood. This immediately ends the creature's move action, even if it had movement remaining, and that crate is considered difficult terrain from that point onward.

Window: The window in the "office" upstairs is a simple wooden shutter over an empty frame. Moving through it does not cost extra squares (though anyone incapable of flight had better be prepared for a 20-foot fall).


5 feet high
10 feet high
15 feet high
X Weak crate
T Trap door
E
S
N
W
One square = 5 feet

SC2: Entering the Portal

Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP)

Setup

Once one of the PCs touches the filigree, the skill challenge begins.

Entering the Portal **Level 9**
Skill Challenge XP 2,000

The image suddenly bends as the face of Moradin turns toward you and speaks in a voice of rending metal. "Who would step through the portal to the heart of Moradin's worship must first prove he understands Moradin in his own heart.

"Think you carefully on Moradin's precepts, his teachings, his actions, and his favored disciples. Then speak unto me a parable, a tale of Moradin, not that you have learned from his texts, but that you have created yourself. Let it show your understanding of his words and his ways, and you may pass."

The PCs must convince the mystical portal that they have a sufficient understanding of Moradin's teachings by constructing a parable that accurately portrays the god's behavior and precepts, yet all is not lost if the PCs fail. They can still attempt to physically break through the filigree to reach the door. Doing so activates the room's magical defenses: a number of homunculi. Proceed to tactical encounter C10. Once the PCs have successfully completed that encounter, they can cut through the filigree as though it were a standard wooden door (it's metal, but it's thin).

Complexity

5 (12 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Religion.

Victory

The portal judges the PCs worthy and opens, allowing them access to the Mountainroot Temple.

Partial Victory

The PCs are partially worthy, and this deactivates *part* of the malfunctioning magical wards. Their partial success means they have to fight fewer of the guardians in tactical encounter C10.

3 or fewer successes: The PCs are considered to have failed the challenge completely, as described below.

4 or 5 successes: The PCs face four writhing chains.

6 or 7 successes: The PCs face three writhing chains.

8 or 9 successes: The PCs face two writhing chains.

10 or 11 successes: The PCs fight only one writhing chain.

Defeat

The PCs must face all five writhing chain homunculi in the tactical encounter if they attempt to force their way through.

Special If the players go through the effort of coming up with a Moradin-based parable, grant them 2 automatic successes. If the party contains a divine character who worships Moradin, they gain 1 success automatically, and that character gains a +2 bonus to all Religion checks in this challenge.

Athletics (DC 20)

This does not count as a success in itself, but grants a +2 bonus to the next check attempted in this challenge. Any given character can attempt this use of Athletics only once.

The PC portrays (or fakes) a knowledge of forging techniques and other endeavors of which Moradin approves.

Bluff (DC 20)

This does not grant any successes, but it can be used to remove 1 failure. Bluff can be used in this fashion only once during this challenge.

The PC swiftly steps into the conversation, covering for an error made by one of his or her companions.

Diplomacy (DC 16)

Only one success can be achieved in this fashion. A failure on this check bestows a -2 penalty to further checks in this challenge until the next success, in addition to counting as a failure.

The PC attempts to convince the portal that the party is worthy, without offering any solid knowledge of Moradin's teachings.

History (DC 20)

Each success on this check counts as a success toward the skill challenge. Although there are no limits on the number of successes that can be obtained with History, History cannot account for all successes; the party must rely on at least one other skill to achieve complete success.

Using the PC's knowledge of past champions, priests, and followers of Moradin, the PC contributes to the construction of the parable.

Religion (DC 20)

Each success on this check counts as a success toward the skill challenge. A success against DC 25 counts as a success and removes 1 failure; this extra level of success can occur only once in this challenge.

The PC draws on religious knowledge and an understanding of Moradin's precepts and teachings to aid in the construction of the parable.

C10: The Portal in the Sepulcher

Encounter Level 9 (2,500 XP*)

Setup

5 or fewer writhing chains (W)

If the PCs fail the skill challenge to enter the Mountainroot Temple, they can attempt to force their way past the filigree imagery. Doing so activates the temple's defenses, which causes several constructs to attack. If the PCs successfully defeat the homunculi, however, nothing prevents them from destroying the barrier between them and the door.

Remove one or more writhing chains based on the number of successes, as described in the challenge. The first chain to be removed is the southwestern one, then the northwestern, than the southern, then the northeastern.

When the chains appear, read:

From the iron image, thin strings of metal—liquid, as though melting—shoot forth. They strike not at you, but at several of the hanging chandeliers, forming a canopy of metallic strands overhead. From those chandeliers, great lengths of chain drop to the floor and then rear up like striking serpents

Tactics

The writhing chains might attempt to yank a PC off a ledge, but they otherwise fight in a straightforward fashion. They are smart enough to focus on one or two PCs, with one chain restraining the foe while the others pound on him.

If the PCs attack the iron strands running overhead, the strings break but instantly reform. Hacking at them provides no benefit.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The room is brightly lit by everburning flames in the chandeliers. The chandeliers hang 10 feet down from the ceiling (and thus, 10 feet above the upper level and 20 above the lower).

Ceiling: The ceiling is 30 feet overhead from the lowest level.

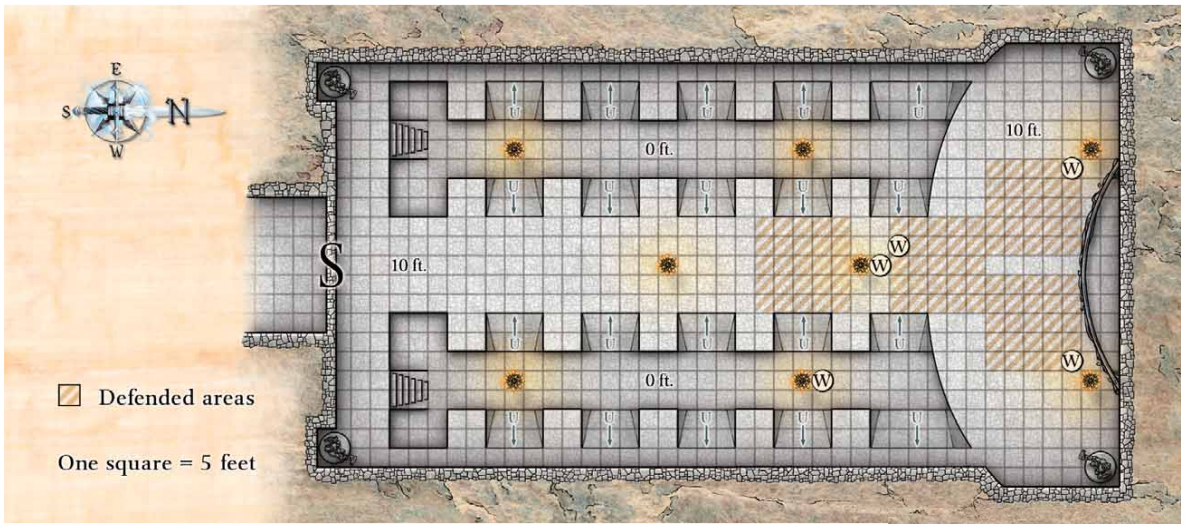
Slopes: The slopes count as difficult terrain for creatures moving up, but not down. A creature pushed or slid down a slope moves an extra square, and a character who falls prone on the slope slides 1 square toward the bottom.

Stairs: The stairs are considered difficult terrain.

Statues: These statues are of the god Moradin, with a pair of ravens—representing the Queen of Death—perched on his shoulders.

Writhing Chains Guarded Area: The guarded areas of the homunculi are marked on the map.

5* Writhing Chains (W)	**Level 10 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 500 each
Initiative +10	**Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
HP 131; **Bloodied** 65	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 7; see also *serpentine strike*	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Winding Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞)	
+13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and target slides 2 squares and is grabbed and restrained.	
Guarded Area	
When making attacks against a creature in its guarded area, the writhing chain gains a +2 bonus to hit, and can stretch itself, granting itself reach 3 on all melee attacks.	
Threatening Reach (within guarded area only)	
This creature can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
Serpentine Strike (move; at-will)	
The chain shifts 3 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 19 (+9)	**Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 21 (+10)	**Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 12 (+6)
*Exact number of writhing chains could be fewer than five. Adjust encounter XP as necessary.	



M1: The Chamber of Doors

Encounter Level 9 (1,800 XP)

Setup

2 harpy screechers (H)
2 slystone dwarf ruffians (S)

The great vestibule of the Mountainroot Temple once held mystic portals to four separate temples of Moradin, as well as a single nonmagical entry: a stair that leads up into the Stonehome Mountains. Now, one of those magical doorways has been destroyed—as has much of the eastern side of the chamber—in various cave-ins. The PCs arrive through the door in the southwest.

The contingent of fey dispatched by King Cachlain has left behind a rearguard, assigned to watch for anyone entering the temple.

When the PCs enter the chamber by using the portal, read:

You feel no magic—no tingling or shimmering. It occurs between steps; one instant, you're in the sepulcher, and the next you're . . . not. You are in a great, stone-walled chamber. Numerous doorways—many of which are contained within deep stone arches, almost like artificial caves—provide egress. A platform with multiple stairs stands near the chamber's center, presumably for a ceremonial purpose long since forgotten. The eastern portion of the room appears to have been largely damaged in an ancient cave-in, marring one of two great reliefs that adorn the far wall.

Perched on one of the archways and atop the undamaged relief, a pair of foul females with ragged hair and the claws and wings of vultures turn piercing eyes in your direction, letting loose with a terrible, predatory cry. Only a few yards from you, what appears to be a scruffy, abnormally short dwarf peers at you between slitted lids.

Perception Check
DC 22: *From the corner of your eye, you spot a second thuggish-looking dwarf skulking quietly in the shadows of the broken wall.*

2 Harpy Screechers (H)	**Level 9 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid	XP 400 each
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22	
Resist 10 thunder	
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
⇢ **Alluring Song** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Charm**	
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +15 vs. Will; the target is pulled 3 squares and immobilized (save ends).	
⇢ **Brutal Scream** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Thunder**	
Close burst 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage. *Secondary Attack:* Area burst 1 within 5; centered on a target hit by *brutal scream*'s primary attack; targets enemies only; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage and the target slides 3 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+6)	
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+9)	

2 Slystone Dwarf Ruffians (S)	**Level 10 Soldier**
Small fey humanoid	XP 500 each
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	
Speed 6; see also *mad dash*	
⊕ **Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the slystone ruffian's next turn.	
⸸ **Mighty Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares. The slystone dwarf ruffian can use this power as a part of a charge.	
Mad Dash	
When the slystone dwarf ruffian makes a charge attack, the enemy is knocked prone on a hit, in addition to any other effects of the attack.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Skills Athletics +14	
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)	
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)	
Equipment leather armor, hammer	

Tactics

The harpies use *alluring song* to split up the PCs and move them into position where the slystone ruffians can attack—preferably with combat advantage—then shift to *brutal scream* as soon as a foe is in range. The harpies take to the air only if they must to keep the PCs in effective range, or if a foe draws too near their perch, and they attempt to remain perched on spots too high for melee combatants to easily reach. The slystone ruffians use ranged attacks initially, then charge their foes from multiple sides. The fey know that the broken passage in the east leads back to the room, and one of them might fake a retreat in an attempt to sneak up on the party from behind.

If three of the fey are slain and the last is bloodied, the survivor attempts to escape and might surrender if escape proves impossible.

Features of the Area

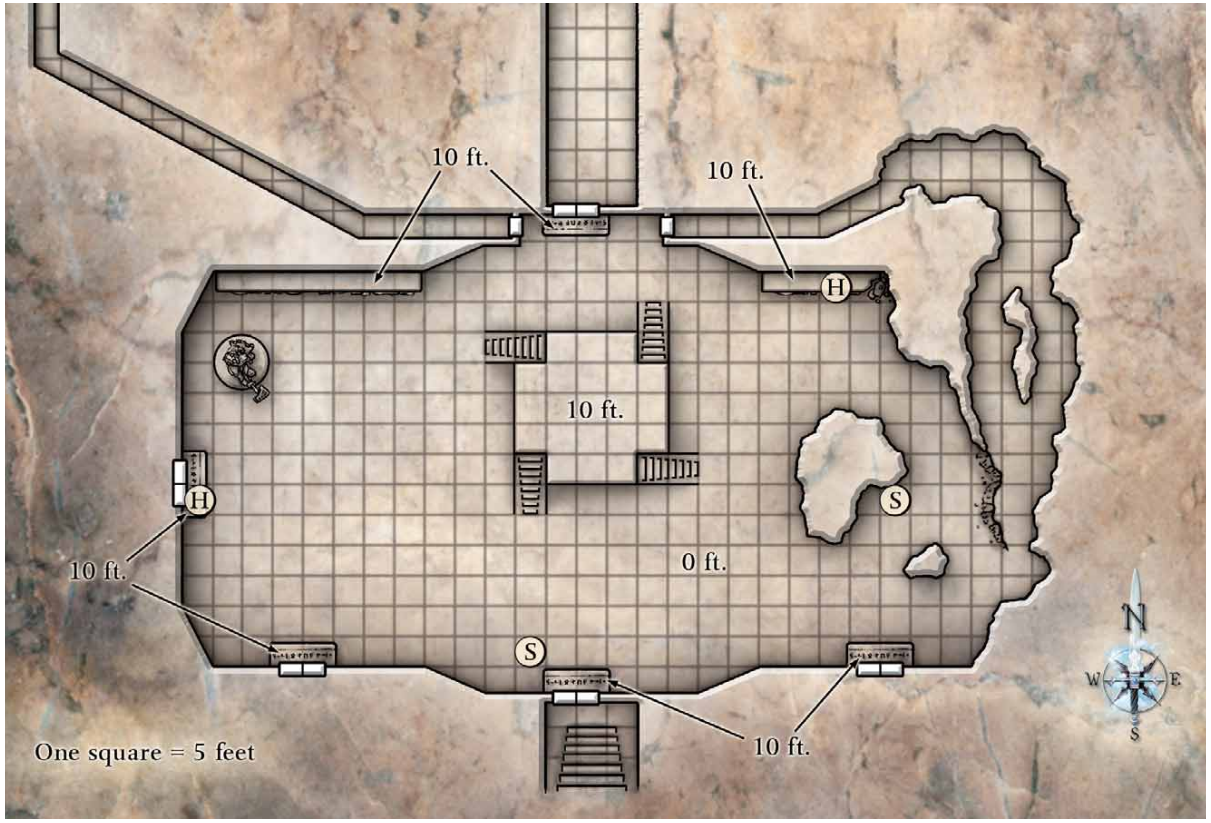
Illumination: The chamber is brightly lit by the fires carved into the two reliefs and the statue, which glow with a magical light. In the broken passage in the east, however, the only light is what the PCs bring with them.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 25 feet overhead.

Archways: The stone archways surrounding the double doors are 10 feet high and are steady enough for perching, standing, or even combat. They require a mere DC 14 Athletics check to climb.

Reliefs: These reliefs show scenes of dwarf smiths at work on a huge forge, while Moradin looks on from beyond. The eastern relief is broken off halfway across, but the fires still glow. The reliefs stick out far enough from the wall that they can serve the harpies as perches, but a normal humanoid attempting to stand on one must make a DC 17 Acrobatics check every round or topple off. They are, however, easy to climb, with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Doors: The southeast door, the southwest door (through which the PCs entered), and the western door are the surviving magical portals.



The Magic Doors

If the PCs open the door through which they entered, they see the sepulcher—but of course they can no longer reach it. If they open one of the other two, decide for yourself what sort of sights they see, based on where else in the campaign world you want the two remaining portals to lead. (You might use these to provide side adventures later on, as a brief diversion from the *Scales of War* adventure path.)

Remember that, until the PCs rescue the Caretaker, none of the external doors—either these magic ones, or the southern door that leads into the Stonehome Mountains—are usable. The PCs can *look* through them, but passing through them proves impossible.

Platform: The platform stands 10 feet off the ground. It has no sides or guardrail.

Statue: A statue of Moradin holds two fistfuls of fire that provide some of the chamber's lighting.

M5: The Vault

Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

Setup

2 harpy screechers (H)
3 quickling runners (Q)
Daggerspring floor

The Mountainroot Temple used the vault to store its valuables—not its religious icons and relics, which were kept in the reliquary (M9), but simple monetary treasures. These included works of art, jewels, the legal forms for grants of land, raw ore, and of course coins.

When the PCs enter the vault, read:

This uneven room is clearly a repository of a sort. The walls are of heavy stone—heavier, even, than you've seen elsewhere in the temple—and several short flights of stairs lead to vaultlike rooms. These separate chambers boast heavy portcullises, though the gates are currently all raised.

A pair of twisted, grotesque little humanoids, with dead-gray skin and inhuman features, drop the coins they were examining as you enter.

Perception Check

DC 25: *You spot another pair of harpies, skulking just beyond two of the entries to the vaults!*

DC 26: *You can just barely make out another twisted gray humanoid, lurking in the chamber to the northeast.*

2 Harpy Screechers (H) — **Level 9 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid — XP 400 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22
Resist 10 thunder
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

Alluring Song (standard; at-will) ✦ **Charm**
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +15 vs. Will; the target is pulled 3 squares and immobilized (save ends).

Brutal Scream (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Thunder**
Close burst 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage.
Secondary Attack: Area burst 1 within 5; centered on a target hit by *brutal scream*'s primary attack; targets enemies only; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage and the target slides 3 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +12
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+9)

3 Quickling Runners (Q) — **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid — XP 400 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 24 (28 against opportunity attacks); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 20
Speed 12, climb 6; see also *fey shift* and *quick cuts*

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.

Quick Cuts (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
The quickling moves its speed. At any two points during its move, the quickling makes a melee basic attack at a -2 penalty. The quickling cannot use this power while immobilized or slowed.

Fey Shift (standard; encounter)
The quickling runner shifts 10 squares.

Maintain Mobility (minor; recharge ⚁ ⚄ ⚅)
An immobilized quickling runner is no longer immobilized.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Elven
Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +9, Stealth +16
Str 9 (+3) **Dex** 24 (+11) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+4)
Equipment short sword

Daggerspring Floor — **Level 10 Obstacle**
Trap — 500 XP

Several squares of the room (marked on the map) are trapped with spring-loaded blades, which trigger when stepped on. The trigger plates are old and stiff, and do not trigger when stepped on by Small or smaller creatures. While this renders any halfling (or other Small) PCs safe, it also means that the quicklings can run across the squares without harm.

Perception
✦ DC 26: The character can discern all adjacent trapped plates.

Additional Skill: Thievery
✦ DC 22: The party gains a +2 bonus to Perception checks to notice the trapped plates and Thievery checks to delay or disable the plates.

Trigger
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks that creature.

Attack
Opportunity Action **Melee** 1
Target: Creature in a trapped square
Attack: +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10+6 damage. On a critical hit, the target is knocked prone and slowed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures
✦ A character who makes a successful Athletics check (DC 6, or DC 11 without a running start) can jump over a single plate.
✦ An adjacent character can disable a trigger plate with a DC 26 Thievery check.

Tactics

The harpies use *alluring song* to drag PCs onto trapped squares, while the quicklings take advantage of the fact that they are too small to trigger the trap and seek to trick characters into chasing them onto the plates. (Because the harpies know where these squares are, they never voluntarily land or step onto them.) Otherwise, both use the interconnecting nature of the vault to maneuver, striking and then dashing behind cover, only to strike again from a different angle.

The quicklings have no interest in parley, but if all are slain, the surviving harpies might surrender (particularly if only one is left, or if both are bloodied).

Special Attack

A creature adjacent to a portcullis can yank it shut with a DC 22 Strength check. If another creature is directly beneath the gate (that is, in the square with the gate marked on the map), the character pulling down the gate can make a Strength vs. Reflex attack. If the attack succeeds, the gate closes on the creature, knocking it prone and causing ongoing 5 damage and restraining the creature (save ends both). The prone creature cannot stand until it has saved against the restraint.

Only Medium or larger creatures can attempt this, since Small or smaller creatures cannot reach the portcullis.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The fey have scattered several sunrods across the room and in the vaults. This provides lighting for the entire area. The larger, central chamber is brightly lit, while the individual vaults are dimly lit.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 20 feet overhead.

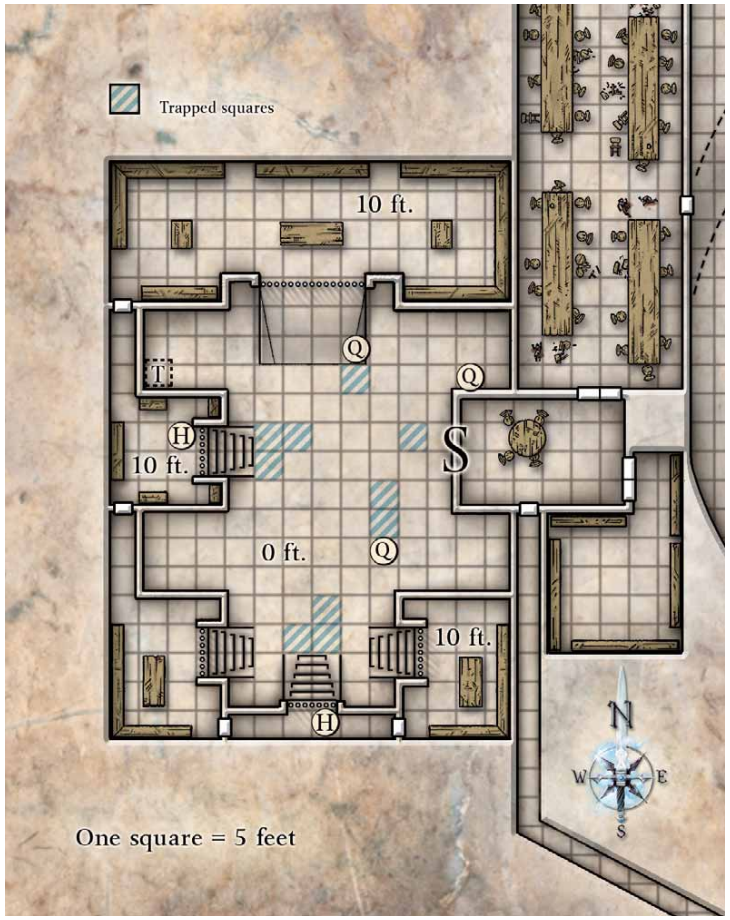
Daggerspring Squares: The trapped squares are marked on the map.

Portcullises: The gates are all currently raised and are corroded in place. A DC 22 Strength check allows a character to yank the bars down, thus closing a portcullis, at which point it requires a DC 20 Strength check to open again. See the sidebar.

Secret Door: The secret door to the east requires a DC 22 Perception check to locate. If the PCs entered by this door, however, they need not roll to find it again.

Secret Trapdoor: The trapdoor requires a DC 25 Perception check to locate. It opens onto a spiral stair that leads into an underground passage (not mapped). This eventually leads to another spiral stair, which comes up to the secret door in the statue in the northwest corner of the reliquary (M9).

Slope: The slope counts as difficult terrain for creatures moving up, but not down. A creature pushed or slid down the slope moves an extra square, and a character who falls prone on the slope slides 1 square south.



M6: The Grand Cathedral

Encounter Level 13 (4,300 XP, but see below)

Setup

This encounter *initially* includes the following creatures:

3 banshrae dartswarmers (B)
5 quickling runners (Q)
1 slystone dwarf ruffian (S)

Once the second wave of adversaries appears, the encounter also includes the following creatures (not marked on the map, since they aren't present at the beginning of the encounter):

1 redspawn firebelcher
2 spitting trolls
4 trolls
1 two-headed troll

For years, the grand cathedral of the Mountainroot Temple was the heart of Moradin worship in the region. A truly gargantuan chamber—more an artificial cavern than a "room"—it has suffered the ravages of time. It has been badly damaged by cave-ins over the years, and rubble covers the floor.

When the PCs enter, read:

Some of you have seen keeps smaller than the vast chamber around you. Roughly oval in shape, save for the crumbling walls to the east, the chamber consists of multiple levels. Stairs in the room's center, as well as great sweeping ramps around the sides, climb to the second level 20 feet above. One of those ramps has partly collapsed along with the walls. Steeps stairs and slopes lead from there to a third level, and a platform not unlike the one in the temple's entry chamber stands high atop that. Huge chunks of wall and stone stand along the broken edge, forming natural ledges, and a deep crevice runs a jagged path to the southeast.

Perception Check
DC 20: *There's another of the vile, bestial-looking dwarves hiding in the lee of the stairs.*
DC 21: *Above, you spot several insectoid-featured humanoids perched on various ledges.*
DC 26: *And there are yet more foes—twisted gray humanoids roughly the size of halflings, lurking around various corners and in the shadows.*

At the start of the third round of combat, read:

A deafening boom rings out over the chamber, echoing through the vastness. Twice, three times, and then you hear a sudden shattering and the sound of wood rebounding off stone.

If a PC is in a position to see the northernmost door at this time, read:

The double doors burst open, and jagged bits of the lock hang loose. Through the open doorway barges an array of horrific figures: several green and mottled trolls, a pair of smaller creatures with similar features and narrowed eyes, and—most terrifying—a broad-shouldered troll with two shrieking heads. Accompanying one of the small trolls is a red-scaled reptile on a heavy chain, and smoke rises from its nostrils and from between its jagged teeth.

3 Banshrae Dartswarmers (B) **Level 11 Artillery**
Medium fey humanoid XP 600 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 89; **Bloodied** 44
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 8
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.
Blowgun Dart (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).
Dart Flurry (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Close blast 5; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, plus the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** telepathy 20
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 20 (+10)
Equipment blowgun, darts

5 Quickling Runners (Q) **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid XP 400 each
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 24 (28 against opportunity attacks); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 20
Speed 12, climb 6; see also *fey shift* and *quick cuts*
⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.
Quick Cuts (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
The quickling moves its speed. At any two points during its move, the quickling makes a melee basic attack at a -2 penalty. The quickling cannot use this power while immobilized or slowed.
Fey Shift (standard; encounter)
The quickling runner shifts 10 squares.
Maintain Mobility (minor; recharge ⚅)
An immobilized quickling runner is no longer immobilized.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Elven
Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +9, Stealth +16
Str 9 (+3) **Dex** 24 (+11) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+4)
Equipment short sword

Slystone Dwarf Ruffian **Level 10 Soldier**
Small fey humanoid XP 500

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Speed 6; see also *mad dash*

⊕ **Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the slystone ruffian's next turn.

↯ **Mighty Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares. The slystone dwarf ruffian can use this power as a part of a charge.

Mad Dash
When the slystone dwarf ruffian makes a charge attack, the enemy is knocked prone on a hit, in addition to any other effects of the attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Athletics +14
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Equipment leather armor, hammer

Redspawn Firebelcher **Level 12 Artillery**
Large natural beast (reptile) XP 700

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Fire Within (**Fire**) aura 5; allies who enter or start their turns within the aura gain resist 10 fire.
HP 97; **Bloodied** 48
AC 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Resist 20 fire
Speed 4

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
+16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).]

↷ **Fire Belch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 12; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

✲ **Fire Burst** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**
Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex 3d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and no ongoing fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 13 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+6)
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 2 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)

2 Spitting Trolls **Level 10 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 500 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 6, climb 4

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.

↷ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.

↷ **Acid Spit** (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d6 acid damage.

Regenerative Empowerment (minor 1/turn, at-will)
One troll within 10 squares whose regeneration is currently inactive (as a result of taking acid or fire damage) immediately reactivates the regeneration.

Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +14
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, 10 javelins

Two-Headed Troll **Level 10 Elite Brute**
Large natural humanoid XP 1,000

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 264; **Bloodied** 132; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.

↯ **Smackdown** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the two-headed troll; at-will)
The two-headed troll targets one creature flanking it; +11 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.

Double Actions
A two-headed troll rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different head. The troll's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.

Dual Brain
At the end of its turn, the two-headed troll automatically succeeds on all saving throws against the dazed and stunned conditions and against charm effects that a save can end.

Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+5)
Equipment hide armor

4 Trolls	Level 9 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 400 each
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +11	
HP 100; **Bloodied** 50; see also *troll healing*	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17	
Speed 8	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
Melee 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage; see also *frenzied strike*.	
⸸ **Frenzied Strike** (free, when the troll's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)	
The troll makes a claw attack.	
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	
Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +14	
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 5 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+4)	

Tactics

Initially, the fey fight to their strengths. The banshrae stay at range and snipe the PCs, while the quicklings and slystone ruffian maneuver in and out of melee combat. The slystone ruffian is particularly fond of bullrushing enemies off edges or into the ravine. The quicklings and slystone avoid bunching up or staying in one spot for long, preferring to make the PCs keep moving across the room and up and down between levels.

Once the trolls arrive, however, the fey split their attentions between the party and the new foes. Similarly, the trolls and firebelcher treat the fey and the PCs as equal threats.

The trolls spread out once they appear through the northernmost door. One spitting troll attempts to stay within 10 squares or so of the two-headed troll, where it can move in and use *poison spit* if the troll takes acid or fire damage. The other spitting troll—the one accompanying the firebelcher—remains near one of the other, normal trolls. Where possible, that spitting troll also tries to remain near the firebelcher to take advantage of the creature's granted fire resistance.

The trolls and firebelcher fight to the death, no matter what, but if any fey survive after all the trolls and firebelcher are slain, they attempt to flee rather than continuing the fight against the PCs. If cornered, they surrender.

Three-Way Fighting

Once the battle between all three factions is engaged, it's *vital* that the DM play the monsters as focusing on *both* the PCs and the other monstrous faction. Some DMs might be tempted to have the monsters focus more on the PCs than on each other, while others might be tempted to give the PCs an easy time by having the monsters focus more on each other.

Avoid these temptations! This encounter (and its XP reward) is balanced under the assumption that, once all three factions are involved, each group of creatures focuses *equally* on the party and the other group. That doesn't mean that any individual monster needs to split its attacks, or that a monster should be stupid and ignore a particular threat. But in any given round, the troll faction should *average* the same number of attacks against the PCs as it does against the fey, and vice-versa.

Obviously, if one faction is whittled down faster than the others, the larger faction can devote more attacks to the PCs, and that's fine. But this should happen only if and when one group becomes markedly smaller than the other, and even then, the winning faction's attentions should be split proportionately between the party and the smaller group of foes.

Players might grow impatient if the DM spends too long rolling dice for NPCs attacking NPCs. Feel free to use average results for damage for each creature during this encounter. Do *not* use these averages when rolling damage against a PC, or when a monster is attempting to save against a PC's ability. But when monsters are attacking *each other*, these average values speed up play and allow the DM to more swiftly return to the players.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The grand cathedral generates its own magical light. The chamber is brightly lit.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 70 feet overhead from the bottom level.

Altar: This great stone altar, shaped roughly like a primitive anvil, stands 5 feet in height, atop the platform at the highest level. Stepping up onto the altar requires an extra square of movement, and the altar provides cover.

Broken Stone Platforms: Along the eastern side of the room, enormous chunks of stone—broken parts of the wall, bits of the ceiling, and the like—lie scattered about. Many are flat enough that combatants can maneuver on top of them. They require a DC 21 Athletics check to climb, and vary in height as marked.

Crevice: The jagged crevice is roughly 20 feet deep, and—thanks to various doors and passages that were caved in long ago—provides the only means of accessing areas M7 and M8. It requires a DC 21 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: The doors to the reliquary at M9 *were* locked, until the trolls broke through them. Now they cannot be locked.

Edges: The edge of the second level overhangs level one slightly; see the map of M10.

Gap: This wide break in the eastern ramp has a ragged edge, and it ranges from 15 to 20 feet across.

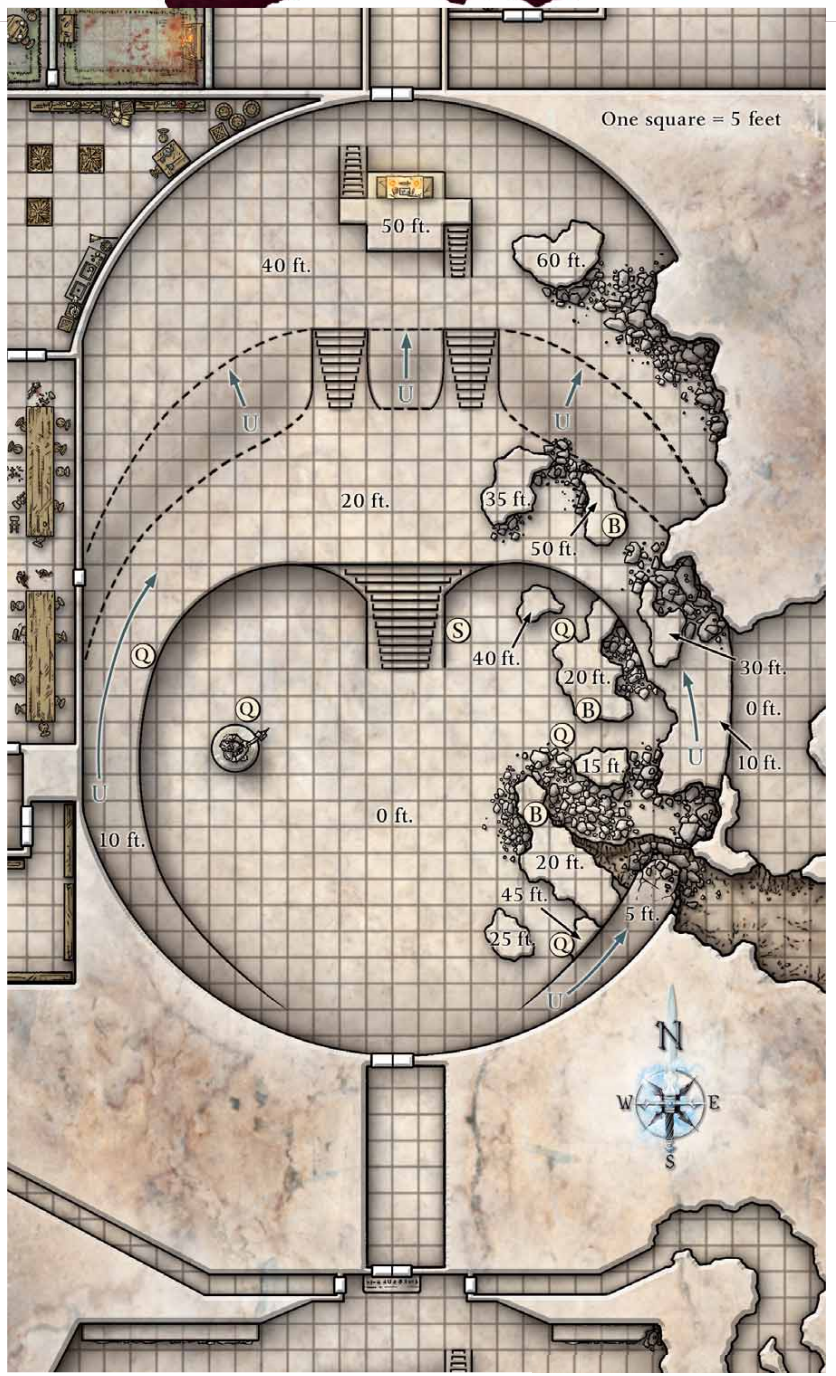
Rubble: The rubble scattered across the floor is difficult terrain.

Slope, Shallow: The two curved ramps that provide access from the first to the second level are shallow and do not qualify as difficult terrain. A creature pushed or slid down the slope moves an extra square.

Slope, Steep: The northern slopes require a DC 11 Athletics check to climb. A creature that steps (or is moved) onto the slope from the top immediately slides to the bottom of the slope and, unless it makes a DC 10 Acrobatics check, falls prone.

Stairs, Steep: The stairs that provide access from the second level to the third level are particularly steep. They are difficult terrain. A creature pushed or slid down the stairs moves an extra square, and a character who falls prone on the stairs also slides 1 square south.

Statue: The statue in the southwest is another statue of Moradin; this one holds an enormous hammer in both hands.



M7/M8: The Shattered Barracks and the Lesser Sanctum

Encounter Level 14 (5,100 XP)

Setup

1 banshrae dartswarmer (B)
4 cyclops guards (C)
Hethralga, unique howling hag (H)
4 slystone ruffians (S)
Cave-in hazard

Here, in these broken and precarious chambers where the priests of the Mountainroot Temple once made their homes, and in the smaller sanctuary where they conducted services and rites too small or private for the grand cathedral, the leaders of the fey have made their camp. Hethralga, personal servant of King Cachlain, lurks here with her bodyguards and most trusted servants. She has already acquired the *Incunabulum*; now she seeks a way to return to the Feywild and grows ever more nervous with each passing hour that her followers fail to find a means of escape.

If the players enter M7 by using the crevice, read:

Hauling yourself up onto the ledge, you are in an uneven cave—clearly a result of one of the ancient cave-ins and not of any deliberate building. To the right, rubble litters the floor, making footing precarious.

Once the players move in far enough to see the eastern portion of M7, continue:

As you progress, it becomes apparent that some construction took place here at one point. Several broken walls and sharp corners suggest that the cave-in reshaped what was once a part of the temple.

A faint glimmer of light, almost invisible, shines from the east.

Perception Check
DC 20: *Barely visible, outlined against that faint light, are a pair of those short, gruff-looking dwarves.*

If the players enter M7 by using the door from M8, read:

You are in a small chamber that has clearly seen better days. Whatever furniture was once here has long since either been removed or crumbled to dust, and the walls are webbed with cracks.

Once the players move down the western passage, or through the northern door, continue:

More wreckage and ruin. Clearly, old cave-ins have reduced what was once a series of carved chambers to broken rooms, twisted passages, and the occasional freestanding wall. Thick heaps of rubble stand here and there on the floor.

If the players enter M8 by using the crevice, read:

Climbing up from the crevice, you have a brief instant to look around. You are in a cathedral or religious sanctuary, far smaller than the main one behind you, and the hall boasts a dais at the far end, behind which looms a great relief of Moradin at his forge. A line of columns runs down both sides of the room; two of the great pillars have fallen, apparently toppled in the same cataclysm that created the crevice.

And then your brief moment of observation has passed, as a cadre of one-eyed giants, axes held high, converges on you!

Perception Check
DC 20: *A handful of gnome-sized fey skulk in the shadows and around the various pillars.*
DC 21: *You spy an old dwarf crone, ancient beyond belief, atop the dais, almost blending in to the relief beyond.*
DC 22: *Not far from her, another of the insectoid fey crouches upon the steps of the dais, its unblinking eyes gazing in your direction.*

If the players enter M8 through the door from M7, read:

The fleeing fey have led you into a much larger chamber. You are in a cathedral or religious sanctuary, far smaller than the main one behind you, and the hall boasts a dais at the far end, behind which looms a great relief of Moradin at his forge. A line of columns runs down both sides of the room; two of the great pillars have fallen, apparently toppled in the same cataclysm that created the crevice.

Retreating off the dais as you approach are another of the inhuman, insectoid fey and what appears to be an ancient dwarf crone, at least several centuries old. From beyond them, a cadre of one-eyed giants, axes held high, converges on you!

Perception Check
DC 20: *A handful of gnome-sized fey skulk in the shadows and around the various pillars.*

When a cyclops makes a cave-in attack, read:

The enormous figure slams a palm into the nearby pillar. The entire column of stone shudders—followed by a much louder rumble as a portion of the roof jars loose from above and tumbles downward!

When the cave-in hazard is triggered, read:

A low groan reverberates through the sanctum, sending dust raining down from above. And then the rain is far more than dust, as bits of rock begin to shake loose.

Banshrae Dartswarmer (B) **Level 11 Artillery**
Medium fey humanoid XP 600

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 89; **Bloodied** 44
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 8

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

Blowgun Dart (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Dart Flurry (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Close blast 5; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, plus the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** telepathy 20
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 20 (+10)
Equipment blowgun, darts

4 Slystone Dwarf Ruffians (S) **Level 10 Soldier**
Small fey humanoid XP 500 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Speed 6; see also *mad dash*

⊕ **Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the slystone ruffian's next turn.

Mighty Strike (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares. The slystone dwarf ruffian can use this power as a part of a charge.

Mad Dash
When the slystone dwarf ruffian makes a charge attack, the enemy is knocked prone on a hit, in addition to any other effects of the attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Athletics +14
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Equipment leather armor, hammer

Hethralga, Unique Howling Hag Level 12 Controller
Medium fey humanoid XP 700

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision
HP 126; **Bloodied** 63; see also *shriek of pain*
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23
Speed 6; see also *fey step*

⊕ **Quarterstaff** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.

Howl (standard; at-will) ✦ **Thunder**
Close blast 3; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 6 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

Shriek of Pain (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Thunder**
Close blast 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 6 thunder damage, or 3d6 + 11 thunder damage if the howling hag is bloodied. *Miss:* Half damage.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
A howling hag can alter its physical form to appear as an old crone of any Medium humanoid race (see Change Shape, *Monster Manual* page 280).

Fey Step (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The howling hag can teleport 10 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Bluff +15, Insight +15, Nature +15
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 13 (+7) **Cha** 19 (+10)
Equipment quarterstaff

4 Cyclops Guards (C) **Level 14 Minion**
Large fey humanoid XP 250 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +13; truesight 6
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 27; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23
Speed 6

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Melee 2; +17 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Evil Eye (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the cyclops guard; at-will)
The cyclops guard makes a melee basic attack against the attacker.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Elven
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 20 (+10) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 11 (+5)
Equipment hide armor, heavy shield, battleaxe

Cave-In **Level 13 Lurker**
Hazard 800 XP

A disruption sets off a chain reaction that doesn't end until all the room is covered in rubble.

Perception
✦ DC 31: The character notices that the area is unstable.

Additional Skill: Dungeoneering
✦ DC 26: Same as Perception, above.

Initiative +6

Trigger
Two rounds after the first time a cyclops makes a cave-in attack, or 4 rounds after combat has begun (whichever comes first), the cave-in hazard is triggered. Between the trigger and the cave-in's attack, characters in the area know that a cave-in is beginning. On its turn, the cave-in attacks a random area within the encounter area (M8).

Attack
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Targets: Creatures in burst
Attack: +16 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d12 + 8 damage
Miss: Half damage
Effect: The burst area becomes difficult terrain.
Sustain Standard: The cave-in attacks each round, targeting a different square.

Countermeasures
✦ A character who makes a DC 31 Dungeoneering check as a minor action can determine the square the trap will attack on its next turn.

Tactics

The cyclopses immediately attempt to converge on the PCs, making use of their ability to trigger cave-ins any time a PC is appropriately positioned. They're also fond of bullrushing PCs back into the crevice as they climb out, and might even ready actions to do so. The hag and the banshrae stay at maximum range for their various powers; if the PCs attempt to close, the pair conducts a fighting retreat, moving either through the door to M7 or into the crevice, depending on which way the PCs are coming from. At least one of the slystones accompanies them when they do this,

potentially leading to a combat that makes multiple circuits of M7 and M8. The hag resumes her normal form after several rounds of combat.

If the PCs approach M8 by M7, rather than by the crevice, the slystone ruffians retreat so they can fight alongside their allies. Otherwise, they enter M8 in the second round of combat, having heard the commotion.

Once the random cave-in begins, Hethralga and the banshrae retreat to M7. The slystones and the cyclopses retreat as well, but more slowly, attempting to maintain melee as they do so (and, hopefully, keeping the PCs in the sanctum, and in range of the cave-in, longer).

Special Attack

A Large or larger creature can deliberately cause rocks to fall from the ceiling by striking high up on one of the chamber's standing pillars. This requires a standard action, and the attacker can decide what square the attack is centered on, as long as it is within 4 squares of the pillar. This is a close burst 1, Strength vs. Reflex attack that deals 2d12 + 8 damage (half damage on miss) and causes the area to become difficult terrain.

The leaning pillar (see below) can also be used as a makeshift attack. If pushed from the west with a DC 19 Strength check (being jammed against the wall, it won't move if shoved from any other direction), it falls to the ground and rolls to the position marked on the map. It makes a +16 vs. Reflex attack against anyone standing in its path; if it hits, it deals 2d8 damage, pushes the target as far as it needs to for the target to be out of the way, and knocks the target prone. Once it lands, it is another fallen pillar, as defined below.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Area M8 is brightly lit by a magical glow emanating from the relief and the standing pillars. The light leaks through the door to M7, providing dim light for the easternmost room and passage. The rest of M7 is illuminated only by whatever light the PCs bring with them.

Ceiling: The ceiling of M7 is 15 feet overhead, while that of M8 is 30 feet overhead.

Crevice: The jagged crevice at the southwest is roughly 20 feet deep, and—thanks to various doors and passages that were caved in long ago—provides the only means of accessing area M6 from here. It requires a DC 21 Athletics check to climb its ledges.

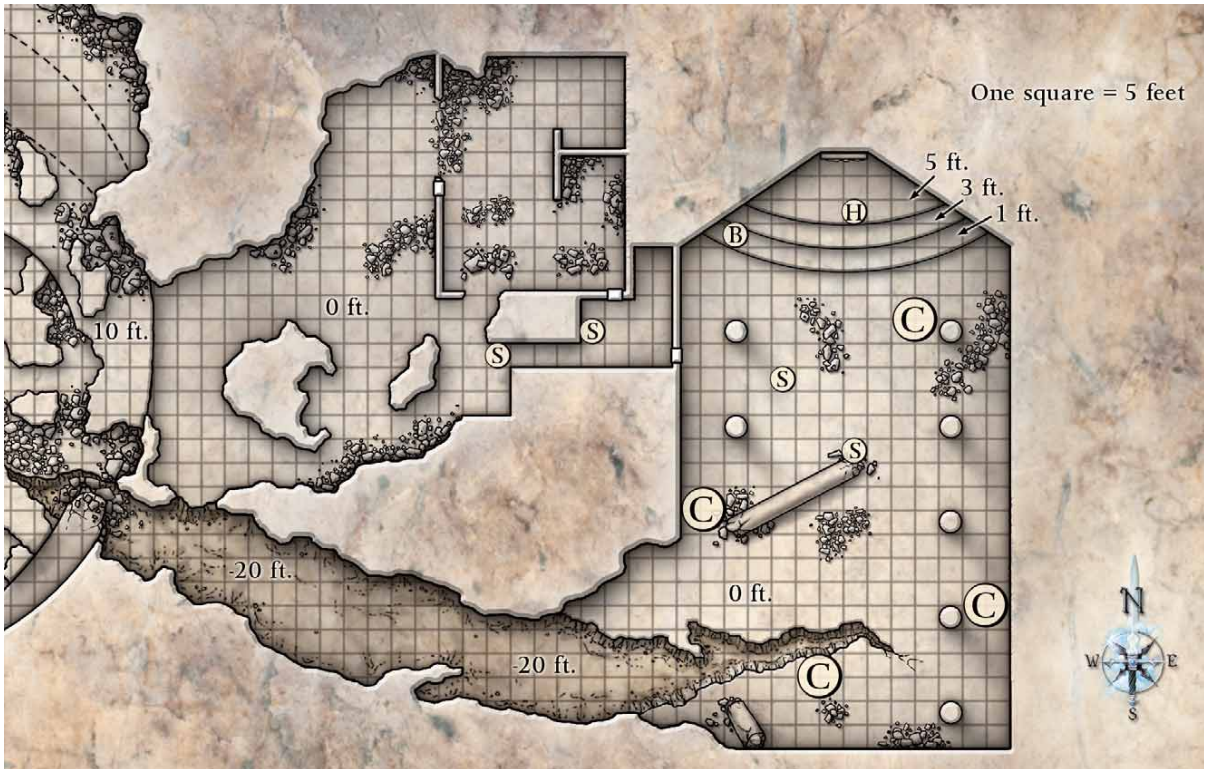
Dais: The steps of the dais are shallow enough that they do not impede movement.

The Incunabulum Primeval: In addition to any other treasure she might have, Hehtralga has the *Incunabulum* on her person.

Pillar, Fallen: The fallen pillar provides cover. A creature can climb over or onto it; this requires an extra square of movement, and requires a DC 17 Acrobatics check if the creature wishes to move more than 1 square atop it.

Pillar, Leaning: The southwesternmost pillar in M8 leans precariously against the wall. It can be used as a makeshift weapon, as described above.

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain.



M9: The Reliquary

Encounter Level 12 (3,700 XP)

Setup

2 dragonborn gladiators (G)
1 eidolon (E)
1 spitting troll (P)
6 streetwise thugs (S)
2 trolls (T)

The first portion of the Mountainroot Temple ever carved from the Stonehome range, the reliquary served as the home for the sect's greatest religious treasures for years on end, though most were removed when the temple was largely abandoned. Its peculiar design was intended to allow priests and worshipers to come and gaze upon these great relics, without allowing anyone to approach. It was also here that angels and exarchs of Moradin appeared from the Astral Sea, entering by using the great double doors to the north. (Remember that, until the PCs rescue the Caretaker, exit from the temple—even by these astral doors—is impossible.)

Zithiruun and his soldiers arrived here from the Astral Sea as well, and here they have set up camp. They are holding the Caretaker hostage in the small building labeled I, where they have spent days torturing him. Although the Caretaker hasn't broken, he has slowly gone slightly mad, resulting in the peculiar behavior of some of the temple's magical defenses. This, alas, includes the temple's guardian eidolon, which has come to accept the githyanki soldiers and treats them as allies in combat.

Although they do not face him here, or even identify him for what he is, this is the PCs' first opportunity to spot their true enemy, General Zithiruun. He is the cloaked figure (described below) they see atop the platform. As soon as he steps out of sight, he heads at full speed for the secret door in the northwest. Given his ability to fly, he can reach that hidden exit and be through it in 2 rounds—possibly before the PCs even reach the platform.

Creatures indicated on the map in red are on the top platform or stairs. Creatures in yellow are on the ground floor, although possibly visible through the platform.

When the PCs enter, read:

You are in a wide corridor. Ahead of you, two flights of stairs, separated by a long landing, lead to a platform high above. Two figures stand atop that platform, apparently conversing. One is a rust-hued dragonborn clad in heavy armor. The other is a slender figure, its features hidden by a hooded cloak. He is clad in a sort of leather-and-steel harness. It looks less like armor than like the creation of a maddened surgeon—a full-bodysuit version of a brace designed to hold a broken limb in place.

You see them only for a split second, for before the door has even fully opened, both have stepped away from the edge and out of sight.

When the PCs reach the center platform, read:

Four stone stairs come together here, forming a small platform about 20 feet above a larger, circular surface. That surface appears to be made of glass or crystal, allowing a full view of the various chambers below. Some of those chambers extend out from beneath the crystal—open-roofed so that you can still see in. The stairs to the north rise upward, rather than down, culminating in a large set of double doors several dozen feet above your current level, and a pair of massive statues of Moradin stand in the northwest and northeast corners. To the southwest stand a pair of small buildings—the only structures in the entire cavern that appear to have a roof.

An array of humanoid creatures stands scattered about the chamber, both on the platform or stairs, and down on the ground level. Not a one of them looks especially thrilled to see you.

What If They Come From the Vault?

If the PCs make their way to the reliquary from the hidden trapdoor in the vault (M5), rather than from the grand cathedral, the situation is only moderately different. You can give the PCs the same basic description (though obviously from a ground perspective, rather than above the platform). They still catch only a quick glimpse of Zithiruun, before he disappears—down to the south, rather than toward the secret door through which the PCs have emerged.

If the PCs open the double-doors in the north (marked A), read:

For an eternal instant, the world fades away as you stand upon the precipice of infinity. An ocean of pearlescent silver stretches ever onward, its tides and crests all but invisible as they slowly traverse the great expanse. Beneath those waters, stars and constellations twinkle with almost blinding clarity, and far in the distance, the great peaks of an unknown isle protrude from the endless waters.

The sense of vertigo here, at the edge of the world, is almost overwhelming, striking not merely at the body but at the mind and soul.

When the PCs first enter area B (or examine it from above), read:

Pedestals and podiums scattered across the room, as well as hooks and shelves along the walls, suggest that this was once a display chamber or gallery. Though most are empty, a few hooks still boast old tapestries and paintings, while the occasional podium displays a small sculpture. It looks as though the vast majority of the artwork has been gone for ages.

When the PCs first enter area C (or examine it from above), read:

Alcoves along the walls and great stone sarcophagi across the chamber indicate rather dramatically that this was once a sepulcher, likely for particularly holy members of the Church. Most of the sarcophagi have been broken into, ransacked, and desecrated. The air here smells a bit stale and dusty, but any scent of decay faded centuries ago.

When the PCs first enter area D (or examine it from above), read:

Apparently a sitting or study room, this chamber contains little but old, decaying chairs and a few small tables barely wide enough for a large tome.

When the PCs first enter area E (or examine it from above), read:

This room was obviously a library at some point. The shelves are mostly empty now, but they are large enough to have held several hundred books. A few heaps of molding parchment and leather are all that remain of those books that were dropped and left behind when the temple was abandoned.

Perception Check
DC 20: *One of the piles of books has recently been disturbed. It looks much like something was removed from the bottom, allowing the rest of the heap to crumple inward. (Although the PCs cannot know this for sure, they might guess that this is where the Incunabulum Primeval was taken from—and they'd be right.)*

When the PCs first enter area F (or examine it from above), read:

The specially carved racks and concave shelves suggest that this was once a repository for scrolls of various sizes.

When the PCs first enter area G (or examine it from above), read:

This rather sizable room boasts a smattering of large statues, idols, and carven pillars. Their random placement around the chamber indicates that they've been moved, and the great empty spaces suggest that this room once held many more such relics than it currently does.

When the PCs first enter area H, read:

This building and its attachment, the only two structures in this cavern to have roofs, are clearly of far more recent construction than most everything else herein. The walls are of thin stone and do not match the surroundings, and the floor is covered haphazardly with a thin rug. Several tables and chairs sit scattered about, and a cooking cauldron occupies one corner.

When the PCs first enter area I, read:

What was once a bedroom has been transformed into a chamber of horrors. Old blood has matted the carpet into a thin film that crunches beneath your feet. Dull blades and needles protrude from the surface of a desk, where they were apparently stuck for safekeeping. A wooden bed frame leans against the wall at an angle; chained to it, dangling by his chafed and bloody wrists, is what appears to be a dwarf with hair and beard of writhing flame! Despite its touch, the wood of the frame shows no evidence of burning.

Once the PCs begin interacting with the Caretaker—assuming combat is over—consult "Departing the Temple" in the "Mountainroot Temple Overview."

2 Dragonborn Gladiators (G)	**Level 10 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *dragonborn fury*	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21	
Speed 5	
⊕ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+15 vs. AC (+16 while bloodied); see also *lone fighter*; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Finishing Blow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Target must be bloodied; +15 vs. AC (+16 while bloodied); 2d10 + 5 damage, and the dragonborn gladiator's allies gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of the dragonborn gladiator's next turn.	
⟡ **Dragon Breath** (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fire**	
Close blast 3; +12 vs. Reflex (+13 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 fire damage.	
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)	
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.	
Gladiator's Strike	
When the dragonborn gladiator hits an enemy with an opportunity attack, the target is knocked prone.	
Lone Fighter	
The dragonborn gladiator gains a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls when adjacent to only one enemy.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Skills Athletics +15, History +7, Intimidate +15	
Str 12 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)	
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+8)	
Equipment scale armor, bastard sword	

Eidolon (E) **Level 13 Controller (Leader)**
Large natural animate (construct) XP 800
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9
Fearless Followers aura 5; allies who enter or start their turns within the aura are immune to fear.
HP 132; **Bloodied** 66
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Immune disease, fear, sleep
Speed 5
Slam (standard; at-will)
Melee 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d8+6 damage.
Divine Retribution (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks the eidolon while *hallowed stance* is active; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
Divine radiance strikes the creature that attacked the eidolon: ranged 20; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 radiant damage. *Miss:* Half damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Vengeful Flames (immediate reaction, when an enemy kills one of the eidolon's allies in the eidolon's line of sight; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Divine fire engulfs the enemy: ranged 20; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire (save ends). This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Hallowed Stance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant**
The eidolon assumes a meditative stance. Until the end of its next turn, the eidolon gains resist 20 to all damage, and all allies in its line of sight deal 1d8 extra radiant damage on their melee attacks. If the eidolon moves, the effect ends.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 7 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+6)

Tactics

The monsters' tactics depend largely on the PCs. If the heroes allow themselves to become trapped up on the platform, the monsters converge and try to surround them. Otherwise, they use a combination of focusing on specific PCs and fighting withdrawals to try to force the party to split up. In either case, the monsters do not remain in their starting positions, but converge on their foes as rapidly as possible. The larger and stronger creatures are fond of bullrushing foes off the edge of the stairs or the crystal platform.

The eidolon never retreats to ground level, since it can keep line of sight to more allies from on high. If all the creatures but the eidolon are slain, it freezes, awaiting further instructions from the Caretaker. All other creatures here fight to the death.

Spitting Troll **Level 10 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 500 each
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 6, climb 4
Claw (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.
Javelin (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.
Acid Spit (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d6 acid damage.
Regenerative Empowerment (minor 1/turn, at-will)
One troll within 10 squares whose regeneration is currently inactive (as a result of taking acid or fire damage) immediately reactivates the regeneration.
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +14
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, 10 javelins

6 Streetwise Thugs (S) **Level 9 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 100 each
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 6
Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 6 damage.
Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +13 vs. AC; 6 damage.
Murder is a Team Sport
If a streetwise thug is flanking an enemy, it deals 1 extra point of damage per ally adjacent to the flanked enemy (including the ally who is granting the flank), to a maximum of +4.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +11, Thievery +8
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, crossbow, longsword, case with 20 bolts

2 Trolls (T) **Level 9 Brute**
Large natural humanoid XP 400 each
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 100; **Bloodied** 50; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Speed 8
Claw (standard; at-will)
Melee 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage; see also *frenzied strike.*
Frenzied Strike (free, when the troll's attack bloodied an enemy; at-will)
The troll makes a claw attack.
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +14
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 5 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+4)

Features of the Area

Illumination: The crystalline platform provides its own glow, as does the door to the Astral Sea, and it brightly illuminates the entire chamber.

Ceiling: The ceiling of the chamber is a full 100 feet above the ground floor. The crystal platform—which forms a ceiling or partial ceiling for the rooms on the ground—is 20 feet above that level. The ceiling of buildings H and I is 10 feet above the ground.

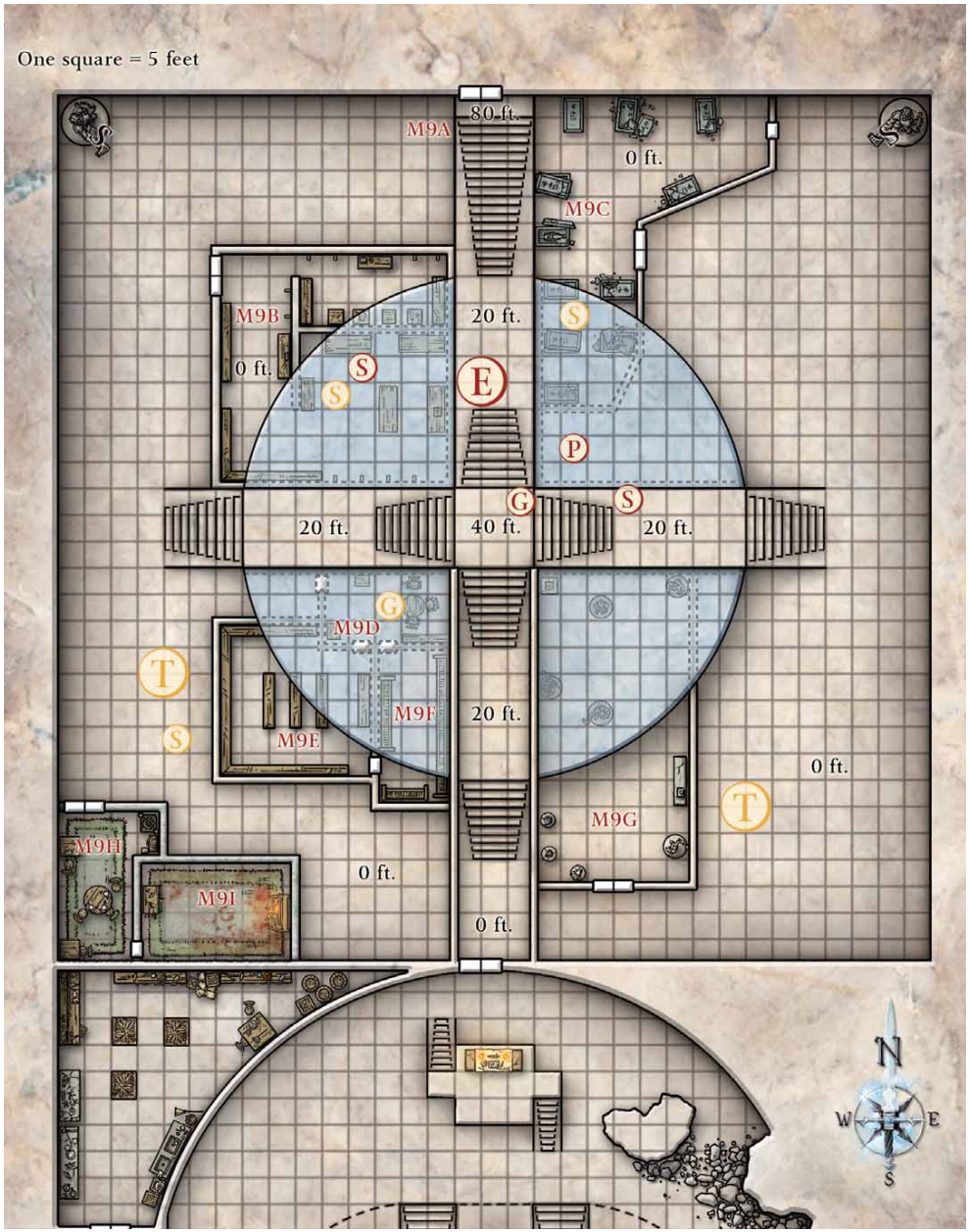
Crystal Platform: Although hard as stone, the crystal platform is as transparent as fine glass. This allows line of sight, but not line of effect. There is no railway or wall around the platform.

Doors: The doors into areas H and I are locked, requiring a DC 22 Thievery check to open. The doors to the Astral Sea (marked A) are covered in all manner of abstract carvings and flowing runes.

Furniture, Display Cases, and Shelves: The various chambers are filled with furniture—some intact, some broken. Assume that, at any time it matters, a piece of furniture requires an extra square of movement to stand on and can provide cover.

Secret Doors: The secret doors in the statues require a DC 25 Perception check to locate. The door in the northwest statue opens onto a spiral stair that leads into an underground passage (not mapped). This eventually leads to another spiral stair, which comes up to the secret trapdoor in the vault (M5). The secret door in the northeast statue leads to a spiral stair that leads to a dead end passage (not mapped). This used to connect to the barracks at M7, but most of the corridor, and the specific room to which it connected, have long since collapsed.

Walls: The walls of the chamber, and the walls of the southern passage/staircase, rise from floor to ceiling. The walls of the various chambers that stand partly or entirely beneath the crystalline platform rise 20 feet high. The portions of those rooms that jut beyond the crystal are not roofed; a creature can walk along the top of the walls, but they're narrow, requiring a DC 25 Acrobatics check for each standard or move action taken.



M10: The Underchambers

Encounter Level 8 (1,800 XP)

Setup

2 marching hammers (H)
Radiant tendrils trap

In the chambers formerly used by priests of Moradin for elements of daily life, the temple's mystical defenses are as crazed as ever, thanks to the Caretaker's incipient madness.

When the PCs trigger the radiant tendrils, read:

A whiplike tendril of piercing white light, so bright it threatens to blind the eye, reaches through the floor, as though the room seeks to wrap you in its coils.

When the PCs first see the marching hammers, either because they have come to the constructs or vice-versa, read:

A halfling-sized block of iron lumbers into view. It appears to be little more than an anvillike body with squat legs and a pair of heavy hammers at the end of long, writhing arms.

When the PCs first enter area A, read:

This chamber was apparently a foyer or waiting room. A ragged rug covers the floor, with a few old indentations indicating where chairs used to sit. The northeast door is ajar, showing a cloakroom with empty pegs protruding from the walls.

When the PCs first enter area B, read:

A great many doors line the walls in this chamber. A few are ajar, showing what appear to be wooden-walled monastic cells beyond them.

When the PCs first enter area C, read:

Nothing remains in this room but a few smatterings of broken furniture. Any hint of its original purpose was lost when the eastern wall partially collapsed long ago.

When the PCs first enter area D, read:

Despite the damage, this room still obviously serves as a combination meeting hall and library. A long table sits amid a smattering of chairs, and the chamber's western side is occupied by a more heavily upholstered chair, a bookcase, and a small altar to Moradin. All are covered in a fine coating of dust.

When the PCs first enter area E, read:

You've stepped into what appears to be an actual forge, which was perhaps used for ceremonial purposes or the creation of magic items. Two anvils occupy the room's northern side, while a fire pit filled with ancient white-gray ashes takes up the center of the chamber. Against the south wall, a larger anvil stands beneath the unblinking gaze of a statue of Moradin.

When the PCs first enter area F, read:

Whatever purpose this cave-in damaged chamber might once have served, it now appears as little more than an empty hollow.

Radiant Tendrils Trap	**Level 13 Obstacle** 800 XP

Gleaming tendrils of white light whip out to lash at you.

Perception
- ✦ DC 27: The character notices something strange about the area ahead, as though the floor was somehow absorbing a bit of the ambient light.

Additional Skill: Arcana
- ✦ DC 23: The character recognizes a faint glow from, and a sequence of runes scratched into, the fire pit, and realizes this is the trap's source. (The character must be in the forge [room E] to accomplish this.)
- ✦ DC 31: The party gains a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to disable the trap.

Trigger
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.

Attack
Opportunity Action **Melee**
Target: Creature in a trapped square
Attack: +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 6 radiant damage and blind until the end of the target's next turn.
Aftereffect: -2 to attack rolls and checks until the end of the target's next turn.

Countermeasures
- ✦ A character who makes a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check can move through a trigger square without provoking the attack. The squares count as difficult terrain.
- ✦ An adjacent character can disable a trigger plate with a DC 31 Thievery check.

2 Marching Hammers (H)	Level 10 Brute
Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 500 each
Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision	
HP 129; **Bloodied** 64	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Hammer Hand** (standard; at-will)	
+13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Hammering Charge** (standard; at-will)	
The marching hammer can use this power as a part of a charge; +13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage, plus target is knocked prone.	
Beat Them When They're Down	
The marching hammer deals 1d6 extra damage when attacking a prone enemy.	
Guard Area (see *Monster Manual*, page 156)	
A marching hammer can make a *hammering charge* attack against any creature in its guarded area, even if the power hasn't recharged. If the marching hammer uses a charge attack to make its *hammering charge*, its speed increases to 8 when making that charge.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Skills Perception +12	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 8 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+7)	
Con 19 (+9) **Int** 5 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+6)	

Tactics

The marching hammers attack characters in their guarded area over other targets, but otherwise seek to slay all intruders. They try to approach intruders from opposite directions, making use of various doorways and corridors to flank foes. They fight in or near the trapped squares, since the trap is mystically attuned to them and they do not trigger it. The hammers have no compunctions about going *through* the wooden walls between penitent's cells if that's the best means of getting at an enemy.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The only illumination is what the PCs bring with them.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 15 feet overhead.

Anvils: The three anvils in the forge are all but impossible to move. They provide cover, and a creature can step up onto one with an extra square of movement.

Bookcase: The bookcase in room D has no more books left on it, but it can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Chairs: The chairs are not sufficient to provide cover, but a character can step up onto one with an extra square of movement, or use one as a makeshift weapon.

Fire Pit: The fire pit has no fire in it, but it is the source of the radiant tendrils trap.

Marching Hammer Guarded Areas: The guarded areas of the homunculi are marked on the map.

Radiant Tendrils: The trapped squares are marked on the map.

Statue: This statue of Moradin carries a hammer and tongs, as though in the midst of forging.

Table: A character can step up onto the table with an extra square of movement. A DC 25 Strength check topples the table over, allowing it to serve as cover and knocking prone any creatures standing on it.

Wooden Walls: The walls between the penitent's cells are flimsy wood. They can be broken through with a DC 15 Strength check; this takes an extra square of movement. If the creature beats a DC 20 Strength check, this does *not* require an extra square.

SC3: Council of War

Encounter Level 9 (1,200 XP)

Setup

Once the PCs reach the council chamber, begin the skill challenge.

Council of War **Level 9**
Skill Challenge XP 1,200

You find yourselves, along with the present members of the council, High Priest Durkik, and several officers, standing in a perfectly square room of stone walls. A table in the center of the room boasts an intricate model of Overlook, while each of the walls showcases maps of the surrounding area.

Great Elder Morgoff asks Durkik to offer a prayer to Moradin to open the meeting. Once done, he says, "Overlook is a martial city. We have mighty walls, strong soldiers. But we are accustomed to fighting foes such as orcs, not monstrous enemies such as trolls, who rise again each time they fall. My friends, you have more experience with such things. Will you help us plan? And would you make yourselves available to us throughout the siege, to deal with such dangers as our guards—skilled though they are—are unprepared to face? I offer you what reward I can for your help, though I cannot cite you numbers or amounts until I see what resources remain when—if—Overlook survives the coming days."

The PCs must aid the Council of Elders and the officers of the garrison in devising a defense for the city.

Complexity 3
(requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
History, Insight, Intimidate, Religion, Thievery.

Victory
The PCs have helped come up with a viable defensive plan, and they gain victory points accordingly.

Defeat
The PCs cannot meaningfully contribute, and do not gain victory points.
Special If the players themselves come up with any creative uses of the city map or terrain for defensive purposes, grant them 1 or 2 automatic successes.

History (DC 20)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
The PC draws on knowledge of past sieges over the course of history and suggests strategies accordingly.

Insight (DC 16)
This doesn't qualify as a success, but succeeding on this check grants the party a +2 bonus to all further checks in this challenge until someone fails a check. However, failure on this check imposes a -2 penalty to all further checks in this challenge until someone succeeds on a check. In either case, Insight can be used only once in this fashion.
With thought and contemplation, the PC anticipates some of the actions that the enemy is likely to take.

Intimidate (DC 20)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge, but the group can gain up to 3 successes with this skill only.
By giving careful consideration to what sorts of positions and defenses are likely to be the most frightening or disheartening, the PC suggests effective placements for the soldiers.

Religion (DC 20)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
Rather than focusing on historical accounts, the PC instead draws on knowledge of various battles described in the myths and tales of the world's religions.

Thievery (DC 20)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge, but the group can gain up to 3 successes with this skill only.
The PC's knowledge of tricks and traps allows the PC to suggest various means to slow the enemy's advance, either through stealthily placed troops or hidden traps and obstacles.

Once the skill challenge is complete (for good or ill), Great Elder Morgoff's shoulders slump. "I fear we've done all we can for now," he says. "We must go and spread word to our soldiers of what is to come, and what they must do. My friends," he says to the PCs, "if you are willing, I would have you stay here at Caer Overlook tonight, so that you are ready on a moment's notice. I can have people show you to guest quarters. I suggest we all get a good night's sleep; I fear the next days will be tiring indeed."

T2: Death from Above

Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

Setup

1 berbalang (B), initially with two **duplicates** (D)

Among the various forces Zithiruun has hired for the assault on Overlook is a trio of berbalangs, who have been promised not only substantial riches, but first pick of the captives and of the dead for their larders. Thankfully, the PCs themselves only have to deal with one.

As the battle commences, the berbalang swoops over a poor neighborhood in the Nine Bells district, dropping alchemical firebombs. It's not a tactically important target, but it's great for spreading panic, and the plethora of old buildings and wooden structures mean the flames will spread. The berbalang is already split into three different forms (the original and two duplicates), meaning the original currently has 204 hit points and the two duplicates each have 102.

Berbalang **Level 10 Solo Skirmisher**
Medium immortal humanoid XP 2,500
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 408; **Bloodied** 204
AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 21; see also *psychic deflection*
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, fly 8
Action Points 2

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

Summon Duplicate (minor, not while bloodied; at-will) ✦ **Conjuration, Psychic**
The berbalang manifests an exact duplicate of itself in an unoccupied adjacent square. It can have no more than four duplicates at once, and duplicates cannot summon other duplicates. When a duplicate appears, it makes an initiative check and joins the battle on that initiative count. All damage a duplicate deals is treated as psychic damage. A duplicate has the same statistics as the berbalang except for its hit points. When the berbalang manifests a duplicate, the berbalang loses one-quarter of its current hit points and the duplicate appears with that quantity of hit points. The berbalang's maximum number of hit points remains the same. Duplicates last until the berbalang reaches 0 hit points, absorbs them, or uses *sacrifice*. A duplicate must stay within 10 squares of the berbalang at all times or it disappears.

Absorb Duplicate (standard; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
The berbalang absorbs a duplicate adjacent to it and regains 50 hit points.

Berbalang Sneak Attack
A berbalang or a duplicate that flanks an enemy with another duplicate deals 1d8 extra damage on melee attacks against that enemy.

Sacrifice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 centered on a duplicate; the berbalang can cause one of its duplicates to explode in a burst of psychic gore; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, plus the target is dazed (save ends). *Miss:* No damage, but the target is dazed (save ends). *Effect:* The berbalang takes 25 damage.

Psychic Deflection (immediate reaction, when the berbalang is damaged by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
The berbalang can deflect the damage it takes from an attack to one of its duplicates. Any effects or secondary attacks included in the attack are also deflected to the duplicate. The damage a duplicate takes in this way is considered psychic damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Supernal
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 13 (+6)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+7)

When the PCs approach, read:

Flames dance across a cluster of rooftops, and the crackling from the fire drowns out the screams of panic as citizens scramble in all directions. In the smoky air above, a trio of horrid winged humanoids, with mottled blue skin, whirl about on the inferno-birthed updrafts. Every few moments, one of them hurls a clay jug that bursts into flames as it strikes a nearby building.

Tactics

The true berbalang stays at range for the first few rounds, allowing its duplicates to close for melee. If any PCs are far enough from its duplicates that it won't hit them, it makes use of its special "firebomb" attack (see below). When a duplicate nears death (down to about one-quarter of its starting hit points), the berbalang moves in and absorbs it. It might then engage in combat, or spawn a new duplicate and retreat to range, depending on how effective the PCs are with distance attacks. Once the berbalang is down to fewer than 50 hit points, it won't spawn any more duplicates, for fear of–so to speak–spreading itself too thin.

Special Attack

The berbalang has three more firebombs in its possession. It makes an attack roll when it throws the firebomb, but it misses only on a natural 1, because it's not aiming for an individual, merely a particular square. (On a natural 1, select a random square adjacent to the one at which it was aiming.) The firebomb explodes in a burst 1. It causes no immediate damage, but it fills those squares with fire as defined in "Features of the Area."

Features of the Area

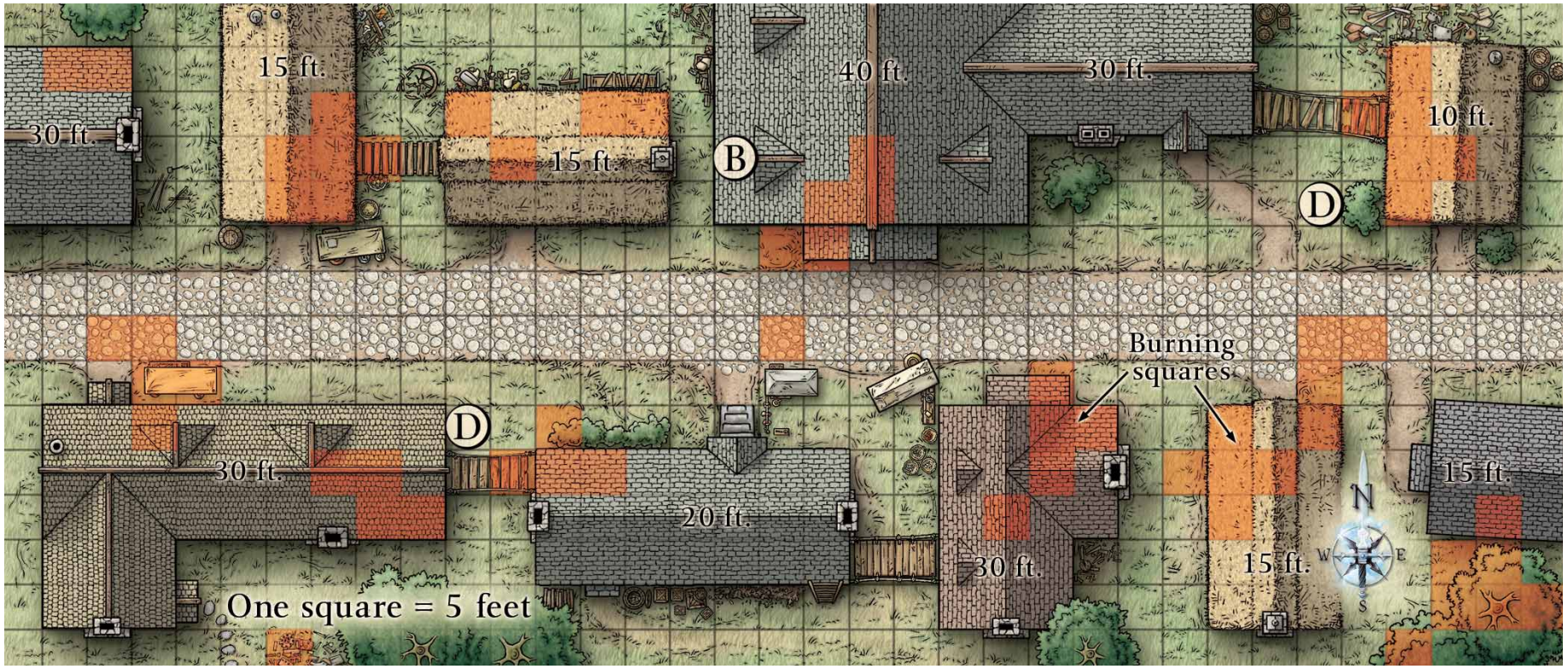
Illumination: The combination of daylight and fire provide as much bright light as the PCs could ever want.

Boards: These boards were placed to facilitate evacuation from one building to another. They can be kicked or pushed off with a DC 5 Athletics check, or a DC 20 Athletics check if someone is currently standing on them.

Buildings: The buildings range from one to four stories (2 to 8 squares) in height. Climbing the walls requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Fire: The marked squares are on fire when combat begins. Creatures can enter or move through the squares unharmed—essentially running through the flames—but any creature that begins its turn in a fiery square takes 2d6 fire damage.

At the start of the berbalang's turn each round, one square adjacent to each fiery square becomes a fiery square. (Either choose or determine randomly.)



T3: Hold the Wall!

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Setup

1 spitting troll (P)
1 two-headed troll (T)
2 war trolls (W)

A squad of monstrous trolls, using a battering ram made of a bronze-capped tree trunk, has smashed a hole in one of the outer walls. The soldiers there have been driven back, and if someone doesn't stop them, the trolls will have free run of the city. "Someone" being the PCs, of course.

(Assume a few other trolls are present, but that the Overlook soldiers are dealing with them. On occasion, throw in a bit of description to remind the PCs that they aren't the only ones fighting.)

When the PCs arrive, read:

Rubble lies strewn about—rubble that used to be a 15-foot stretch of wall. Visible just beyond is a huge tree trunk, capped with bronze—presumably, the battering ram that created that hole.

Moving through the gap are several hideous trolls. The city guards appear to have a few occupied, but others—two in heavy armor, one with two heads, and one far smaller than the others—are moving unimpeded into the streets.

Spitting Troll (P) **Level 10 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 500

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 6, climb 4

Claw (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.

Javelin (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.

Acid Spit (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d6 acid damage.

Regenerative Empowerment (minor 1/turn, at-will)
One troll within 10 squares whose regeneration is currently inactive (as a result of taking acid or fire damage) immediately reactivates the regeneration.

Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +14

Str 16 (+8)	**Dex** 21 (+10)	**Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 10 (+5)	**Cha** 13 (+6)

Equipment leather armor, 10 javelins

Tactics

The two-headed troll is a straightforward combatant, charging in and attempting to pulp the PCs into the ground. The war trolls make use of slightly more intelligent tactics, flanking or trying to fight from behind difficult terrain, taking full advantage of reach. The spitting troll remains at range and throws javelins.

Two-Headed Troll **Level 10 Elite Brute**
Large natural humanoid XP 1,000

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 264; **Bloodied** 132; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)
AC 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Claw (standard; at-will)
Melee 2; +13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.

Smackdown (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the two-headed troll; at-will)
The two-headed troll targets one creature flanking it; +11 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.

Double Actions
A two-headed troll rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different head. The troll's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.

Dual Brain
At the end of its turn, the two-headed troll automatically succeeds on all saving throws against the dazed and stunned conditions and against charm effects that a save can end.

Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant

Str 24 (+12)	**Dex** 10 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 22 (+11)	**Int** 6 (+3)	**Cha** 10 (+5)

Equipment hide armor

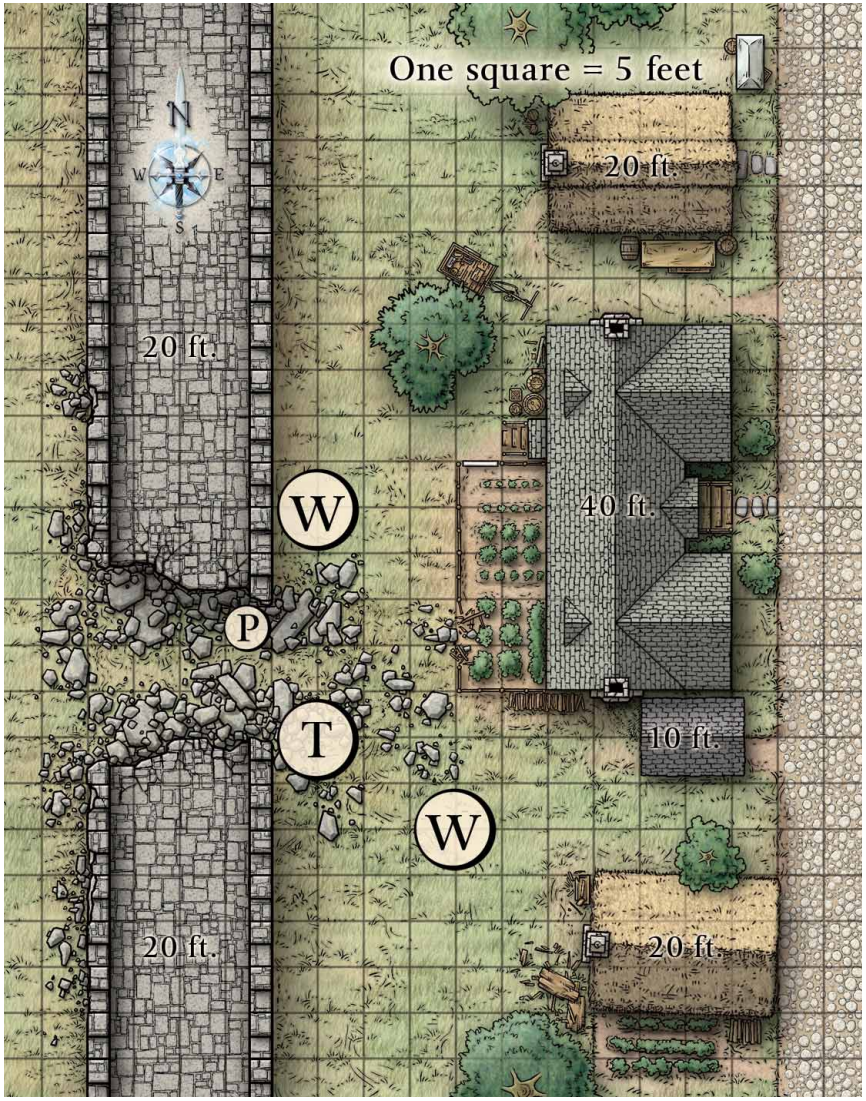
2 War Trolls (W)	Level 14 Soldier
Large natural humanoid	XP 1,000 each
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +15	
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55; see also *troll healing*	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25	
Speed 7	
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Greatsword** **Weapon**	
Melee 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the war troll's next turn.	
(standard; at-will) **Claw**	
Melee 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.	
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Longbow** **Weapon**	
Ranged 20/40; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage.	
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Sweeping Strike** **Weapon**	
Requires greatsword; close blast 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Blood Pursuit (immediate reaction, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the war troll moves or shifts; at-will)	
The war troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.	
Threatening Reach	
The war troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**	
If the war troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	
Skills Athletics +17, Endurance +15	
Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+10)	
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+8)	
Equipment plate armor, greatsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows	

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright daylight.

Buildings: The buildings range from two to eight stories (4 to 16 squares) in height. Climbing the walls requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Rubble: The rubble qualifies as difficult terrain.



SC4: Combing the Wreckage

Encounter Level 11 (1,800 XP)

Setup

One of the councilors is in trouble, and the PCs receive a request for assistance. The skill challenge begins with this request.

Combing the Wreckage	**Level 11**
Skill Challenge	XP 1,800

Without warning, you hear Great Elder Morgoff's voice in your head. "Our diviners have located Councilor Mountainhome. A siege missile struck her home, which now burns as she lies unconscious! Please save her!"

Although the PCs likely don't know where Elder Mountainhome lives, anyone they ask can point them in the right direction: an expensive apartment in Stonehammer.

The PCs must search through a burning, crumbling building in search of Counselor Itrika Mountainhome.

Complexity 3
(requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, Heal, Perception.

Victory
The party finds the unconscious Itrika and successfully pulls her out before she chokes to death or is crushed.

Defeat
The party is too late to save the councilor, who dies in the inferno.

Special Reward creative use of magic. Perhaps various resistance-based spells can grant automatic Endurance successes, while using cold-based spells on the fires reduces the DCs of some of the checks.

Acrobatics (DC 21)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge. Moving as swiftly and lithely as possible, the PC dodges around falling timbers and pockets of flame.

Athletics (DC 21)
A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge. With a surge of strength, the PC bursts through intervening doors, reaches up to deflect crumbling roofs, or hauls a companion off a collapsing stair.

Endurance (DC 17)
At least one character must attempt this check every round, or it counts as attempting and failing the check. A success on this check grants no benefit; a failure on this check costs everyone in the party a healing surge, but does not count as a failure for purposes of the skill challenge. Despite the blazing heat, the choking smoke, and the blinding dust, the PC is not only able to keep going, but to keep friends moving as well.

Heal (DC 25)
A success on this check counts as both a success on the skill challenge and grants an automatic success on the party's next Endurance check in this challenge (or counters an Endurance failure rolled earlier in the round). Acting swiftly, the PC uses moistened cloths and herbal remedies to alleviate some of the burns and choking among the party.

Perception (DC 21)
This does not count as a success on the skill challenge, but grants you a +2 bonus to all future Acrobatics, Athletics, and Heal checks in this challenge, until the next failure. Squinting and concentrating, the PC finds his or her way, and leads allies through the smoke, the embers, and the falling rubble.

If the PCs succeed in rescuing the councilor, they receive thanks and an offer to meet up again after the current troubles are over. If she isn't brought to consciousness by the PCs, you could allow them to find someone who is willing to do so and possibly even help get her to safety.

T5: The Final Encounter

Encounter Level 15 (6,100 XP)

Setup

General Zithiruun (Z)
Rathoraiax (R)
2 dragonborn gladiators (G)
1 dragonborn raider (D)
1 redspawn firebelcher (B)

This is it. The party is about to come face to face with General Zithiruun and learn the identity of their enemy. This is the final battle of the siege and of the adventure, at least where the PCs are concerned. And if they're not *very* careful and skilled, it might be their last one *ever*.

When the PCs arrive, read:

Scattered around the open courtyard, and across the stoops of the nearby buildings, are the corpses of dozens of Overlook's soldiers. Some are badly burned, some slashed to ribbons, and some rotting as though they'd lain dead for weeks on end. Two dragonborn in heavy armor wait across the courtyard; one stands beside a large, red-scaled reptile exhaling large puffs of smoke.

Perception Check
DC 26: *Hiding amid the rubble and ruin is another dragonborn, one of darker scales and armor, wielding a pair of broad-bladed daggers.*

On the second round of combat, on Zithiruun's initiative, read:

A horrific boom reverberates from a nearby building as a massive beast soars over the rooftop, knocking several of the stones from their place. What appears to be a dead dragon, its scales dull, its gray leather skin showing between the gaps, rises into the air on broken wings. The entire top of its jaw is missing, showing upward pointing teeth and a wormlike tongue that thrashes about with a mind of its own.

And riding atop that beast is a humanoid figure clad in heavy hides, contained within a body harness of iron joints and leather straps. His limbs and face are gaunt, nearly desiccated. Several old wounds hang open, leaking trails of blood and puss, showing bare bone in some spots and metal plates in others. But despite his old injuries and deformities, his narrow features and his yellowed, leathery skin clearly mark him as one of the dread githyanki, raiders and conquerors of the Astral Sea.

Zithiruun, the Broken General (Z) Skirmisher (Leader)	**Level 14 Elite**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,000
Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9	
HP 280; **Bloodied** 140	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 26; **Reflex** 29; **Will** 28	
Resist 10 psychic	
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects)	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
Silver Saber (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.	
Thrown Saber (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Ranged 5/10 if thrown; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage. *Special*: If thrown, the weapon returns to Zithiruun's hand immediately after the attack is resolved.	
Silver Barrage (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Zithiruun makes two *silver saber* attacks.	
Silver Flurry (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Zithiruun makes up to 2 attacks, each against a different target; he can shift 2 squares before the first attack, between each attack, and after the final attack; +19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage plus 2d8 psychic damage.	
Psionic Aim (immediate reaction when an ally within 5 squares misses with an attack; encounter)	
The ally can reroll the attack, keeping the second result.	
Mind Over Body	
Due to the psionic energy of the harness and armor he wears, Zithiruun uses Charisma in place of Wisdom for determining hit points and Fortitude defense. (He still uses Constitution for other purposes such as Endurance checks.)	
Mind Shock ✦ **Charm**	
Whenever Zithiruun damages a target with his *silver saber*, *thrown saber*, *silver flurry*, or *silver barrage* attacks, the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of Zithiruun's next turn.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; at-will)	
Zithiruun can fly 5 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic	
Skills History +16, Insight +14	
Str 6 (+5) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+9)	
Con 6 (+5)* **Int** 19 (+11) **Cha** 20 (+12)	
*See *mind over body*	
Equipment: Hide armor and body harness, two silver sabers	

Dragonborn Raider (D)	Level 13 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 800
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +13	
HP 129; **Bloodied** 64; see also *dragonborn fury*	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 21	
Speed 7	
(+) **Katar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC (+20 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 damage (crit 2d6 + 10).	
Twin Katar Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
If the dragonborn raider doesn't take a move action on its turn, it shifts 1 square and makes two katar attacks, or vice versa.	
Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fire**	
Close blast 3; +14 vs. Reflex (+15 while bloodied); 1d6 + 3 fire damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The dragonborn raider deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)	
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.	
Infiltrating Stride (move; recharges after the dragonborn raider attacks two different enemies with *twin katar strike*)	
The dragonborn raider shifts 3 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Skills History +8, Intimidate +9, Stealth +16	
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+8)	
Con 17 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+7)	
Equipment leather armor, 2 katars	

Tactics

The dragonborn gladiators close as rapidly as possible, while the dragonborn raider attempts to sneak or shift around the battle, working to obtain combat advantage. The redspawn firebelcher is trained to avoid its allies; it remains at range and snipes at the PCs.

When they appear on round two, Zithiruun is mounted on Rathoraiax, but they immediately separate, preferring to fight as two entities. The undead dragon is a clumsy flier, so once it lands and engages in battle, it normally remains on the ground.

Zithiruun uses *silver barrage* to cut through the party, and then makes use of whatever powers are most appropriate for the circumstances. He keeps in constant motion and tries to avoid getting in melee with defenders (since loss of mobility is crippling for him), preferring to let his allies deal with them while he takes down controllers and leaders. He is willing to retreat from the battle, but only to regroup and come back at the PCs again. (Although Zithiruun normally doesn't fight to the death, the success of this operation is his only means of regaining his position among the githyanki; he'll die trying to make it work.)

Rathoraiax (R)	Level 13 Elite Brute
Large natural animate (dragon, undead)	XP 1,600
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 328; **Bloodied** 164	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 29; **Reflex** 22; **Will** 24	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 4, fly 8 (clumsy)	
Action Points 1	
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone if it is Large size or smaller.	
Tail Crush (minor; at-will)	
Reach 2; prone targets only; +14 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 damage.	
Savage Fury (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚅ ⚅)	
Rathoraiax makes two claw attacks.	
Breath of the Grave (standard; encounter) ✦ **Necrotic, Poison**	
Close blast 5; +14 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 6 poison and necrotic damage, plus the target takes ongoing 10 poison and necrotic damage and is weakened (save ends both).	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 9 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+9)	
Con 24 (+13) **Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 3 (+2)	

Special Attack

When Rathoraiax first appears—and if it takes to the air again later in combat—it might attempt to knock loose stones off the tops of buildings onto PCs below. It can only target characters who are within 2 squares of a building, and it must be adjacent to the top of that building, on the same side as the target. This is an area burst 1, +14 vs. the target's Reflex. The target takes 2d10 + 6 damage and is knocked prone. (On a miss, the target takes half damage and is not knocked prone.) The area becomes difficult terrain.

2 Dragonborn Gladiators (G)	Level 10 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *dragonborn fury*	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21	
Speed 5	
(+) **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+15 vs. AC (+16 while bloodied); see also *lone fighter*; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
Finishing Blow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Target must be bloodied; +15 vs. AC (+16 while bloodied); 2d10 + 5 damage, and the dragonborn gladiator's allies gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of the dragonborn gladiator's next turn.	
Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fire**	
Close blast 3; +12 vs. Reflex (+13 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 fire damage.	
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)	
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.	
Gladiator's Strike	
When the dragonborn gladiator hits an enemy with an opportunity attack, the target is knocked prone.	
Lone Fighter	
The dragonborn gladiator gains a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls when adjacent to only one enemy.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Skills Athletics +15, History +7, Intimidate +15	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)	
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+8)	
Equipment scale armor, bastard sword	

Redspawn Firebelcher	**Level 12 Artillery**
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 700
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision	
Fire Within (**Fire**) aura 5; allies who enter or start their turns within the aura gain resist 10 fire.	
HP 97; **Bloodied** 48	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 4	
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**	
+16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Fire Belch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**	
Ranged 12; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Fire Burst (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**	
Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex 3d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and no ongoing fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 13 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+6)	
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 2 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)	

Features of the Area

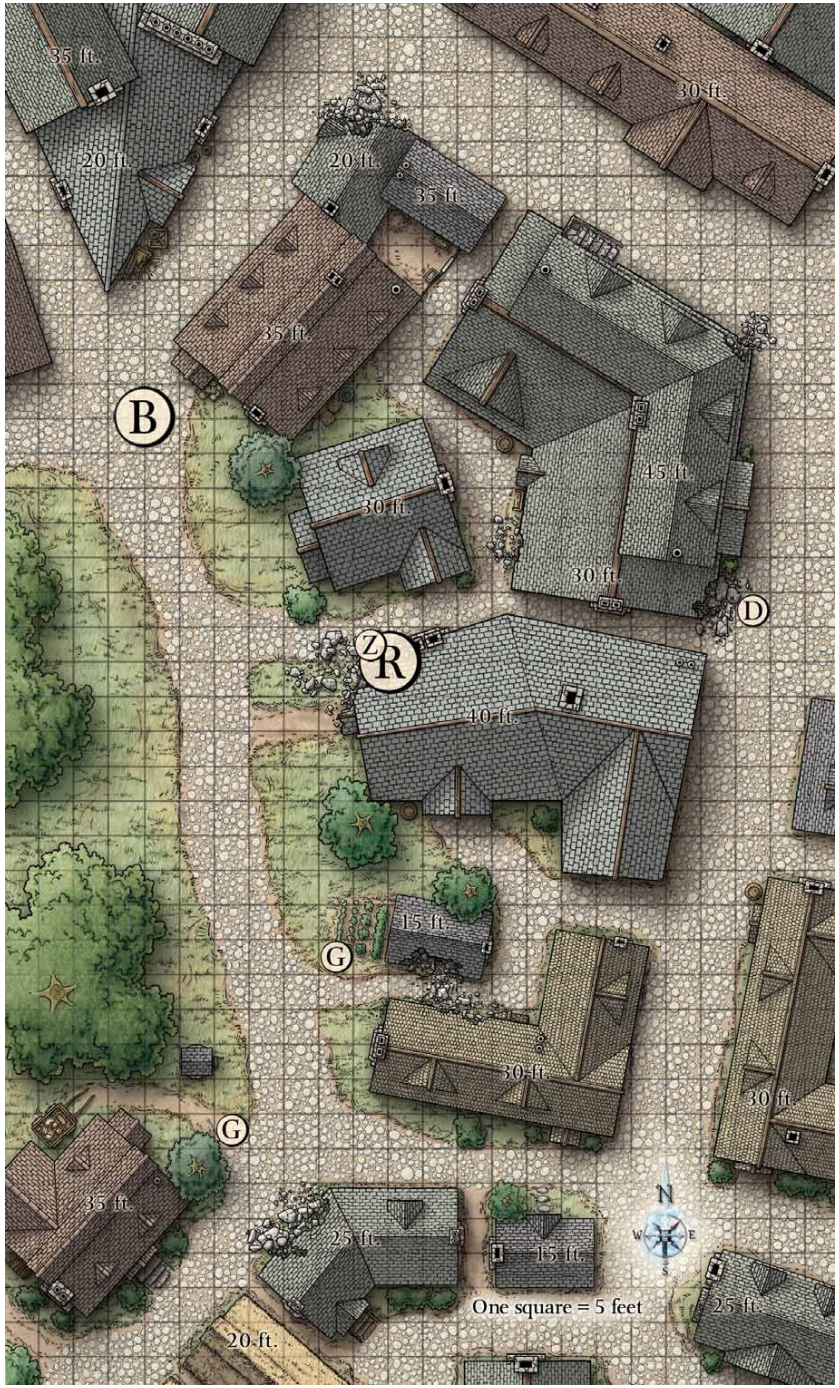
Illumination: This encounter takes place in early morning and is thus brightly lit.

Bodies: The corpses qualify as difficult terrain.

Buildings: The buildings range from two to eight stories (4 to 16 squares) in height. Climbing the walls requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain.

Trees: The trees provide cover and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Most are only between 10 and 20 feet (2 to 4 squares) high.



Appendix 1: New Monsters

Harpy

Harpies use their sweet songs to pacify victims before tearing them to pieces with their claws. For more on harpies in general, see the *Monster Manual*, page 154.

Harpy screechers are closely related to the typical harpy, but they are a lot more potent—and hold a fearsome power in reserve.

Harpy Screecher	**Level 9 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22	
Resist 10 thunder	
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
✧ **Alluring Song** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Charm**	
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +15 vs. Will; the target is pulled 3 squares and immobilized (save ends).	
✧ **Brutal Scream** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Thunder**	
Close burst 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage. *Secondary Attack:* Area burst 1 within 5; centered on a target hit by *brutal scream*'s primary attack; targets enemies only; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 thunder damage and the target slides 3 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+6)	
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+9)	

Harpy Screecher Tactics

Like other harpies, screechers use *alluring song* to lure victims in close, and they prefer to fight from the ground rather than in the air. A harpy screecher uses *brutal scream* if foes clump together, not merely to cause great harm but to force them to disperse, hopefully leaving one or more in a vulnerable position.

Harpy Lore

In addition to the information given in the *Monster Manual*, a character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 20: Screechers are tougher relatives of normal harpies. Their attacks appear to infuse the target with the harpy's own deadly scream, forcing them to unleash it upon their allies.

Homunculus

Homunculi are minor constructs created to guard specific places, objects, or beings. They require no food or sleep, and they can maintain their watch indefinitely.

The following types of homunculi, both dwarf-created, follow the same rules as other homunculi (*Monster Manual*, page 156). Marching hammers are small bodies of iron—shaped vaguely like anvils—with squat legs and a pair of long, writhing arms that end in heavy, double-headed warhammers. Writhing chains are little more than their name implies—long, heavy chains that writhe, move, and strike like serpents.

Marching Hammer	**Level 10 Brute**
Small natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 500
Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision	
HP 129; **Bloodied** 64	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Hammer Hand** (standard; at-will)	
+13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Hammering Charge** (standard; at-will)	
The marching hammer can use this power as a part of a charge; +13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage, plus target is knocked prone.	
Beat Them When They're Down	
The marching hammer deals 1d6 extra damage when attacking a prone enemy.	
Guard Area (see *Monster Manual*, page 156)	
A marching hammer can make a *hammering charge* attack against any creature in its guarded area, even if the power hasn't recharged. If the marching hammer uses a charge attack to make its *hammering charge*, its speed increases to 8 when making that charge.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Skills Perception +12	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 8 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+7)	
Con 19 (+9) **Int** 5 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+6)	

Marching Hammer Tactics

Marching hammers are tasked with guarding a particular area. They attack directly, moving in on the enemy—favoring foes already in their guarded area above those merely approaching it—and crushing them into pulp.

Writhing Chain	Level 10 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 500
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 131; **Bloodied** 65	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 7; see also *serpentine strike*	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Winding Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)	
+13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and target slides 2 squares and is grabbed and restrained.	
Guarded Area	
When making attacks against a creature in its guarded area, the writhing chain gains a +2 bonus to hit and can stretch itself, granting itself reach 3 on all melee attacks.	
Threatening Reach (within guarded area only)	
This creature can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
Serpentine Strike (move; at-will)	
The chain shifts 3 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+7)	
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 12 (+6)	

Writhing Chain Tactics

Like the hammers, writhing chains are normally assigned to guard an area. They prefer to stay out of range of enemies within that area, striking with their reach. Writhing chains are particularly fond of teaming up, which allows one to restrain a foe while the others pummel him.

Slystone Dwarf Ruffians

Crafty, ill-tempered, and violent, slystone dwarves are fey cousins of gnomes, with whom they share little in common, though they more closely resemble squat, scruffy dwarves. (It is that resemblance that gave them their Common-tongue name.) Slystone dwarves possess a gift they call "the unyielding soul," which allows them several magical abilities. The slystone dwarf ruffian, below, represents only one of the most common varieties of this brutal race.

Slystone Dwarf Ruffian	Level 10 Soldier
Small fey humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 104; **Bloodied** 52	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	
Speed 6; see also *mad dash*	
⊕ **Hammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the slystone ruffian's next turn.	
⸸ **Mighty Strike** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares. The slystone dwarf ruffian can use this power as a part of a charge.	
Mad Dash	
When the slystone dwarf ruffian makes a charge attack, the enemy is knocked prone on a hit, in addition to any other effects of the attack.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Skills Athletics +14	
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)	
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)	
Equipment leather armor, hammer	

Slystone Dwarf Ruffian Tactics

Slystone ruffians initiate combat with *raging stone*, then charge into melee with *mad dash*. Once engaged in melee, they prefer to knock a foe away with *mighty strike* if they need some distance (perhaps to use *raging stone* again), rather than retreating.

Slystone Dwarf Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Slystone dwarves were misnamed by the first humans to encounter them. Though they might appear to be small dwarves, they are in fact cousins to gnomes, albeit far more vicious and cruel. They take pleasure in the pain of others, and grow murderous at the slightest insult.

DC 20: Some slystone dwarves serve fomorian kings, others evil eladrins. They're mercenary and are happy working for anyone who offers them the opportunity for violence.

Troll

A troll eats anything that moves, from grubs to humans, and is rightly feared for its ravenous appetite, feral cunning, and remarkable regenerative powers. For more on trolls in general, see the *Monster Manual*, page 254.

Spitting trolls are smaller than their kin—averaging only the size of an adult human—but they're also far smarter. A combination of their natural intelligence and the power that their *poison spit* grants them over other trolls often allows them to take leadership positions in troll packs.

Spitting Troll	**Level 10 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +8	
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53; see also *troll healing*	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	
Speed 6, climb 4	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.	
⊕ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**	
Ranged 10/20; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 poison damage.	
Acid Spit (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Acid**	
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d6 acid damage.	
Regenerative Empowerment (minor 1/turn, at-will)	
One troll within 10 squares whose regeneration is currently inactive (as a result of taking acid or fire damage) immediately reactivates the regeneration.	
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant	
Skills Athletics +13, Endurance +14	
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+8)	
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)	
Equipment leather armor, 10 javelins	

The rare two-headed trolls are just as brutal as their standard cousins, but far more dangerous.

Spitting Troll Tactics

Spitting trolls prefer to let their allies move into melee and soften up the foe, while the spitting troll hangs back and throws javelins. After a few rounds, however, their bloodlust takes hold and they move in close. When fighting alongside other trolls, spitting trolls rarely use their *poison spit* as a weapon, preferring to hold it in reserve to aid their troll allies. The poison on a spitting troll's claws and javelins is a variant of their naturally occurring poison, but the act of treating it for application to weapons removes its special properties where other trolls are concerned.

Two-Headed Troll Tactics

Like other trolls, the two-headed variety is not a subtle combatant. It wades into its foes, lashing out and counting on regeneration to keep it alive. Essentially, it fights just like a traditional troll, but with twice as many attacks.

Troll Lore

In addition to the information given in the *Monster Manual*, a character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 20: Spitting trolls are smaller but smarter than other trolls. They boast a poison spit that can either harm other trolls like acid, or cause a troll's regeneration to resume after being suppressed by fire or acid.

Two-headed trolls are much like normal trolls, but even more brutal and dangerous. Sages debate whether two-headed trolls are the results of crossbreeding between trolls and ettins, or a mutation caused when a troll's regeneration ability manifests too early and warps the embryo while still in the womb.

Two-Headed Troll	**Level 10 Elite Brute**
Large natural humanoid	XP 1,000
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7	
HP 264; **Bloodied** 132; see also *troll healing*	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
Melee 2; +13 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.	
Smackdown (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the two-headed troll; at-will)	
The two-headed troll targets one creature flanking it; +11 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.	
Double Actions	
A two-headed troll rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different head. The troll's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.	
Dual Brain	
At the end of its turn, the two-headed troll automatically succeeds on all saving throws against the dazed and stunned conditions and against charm effects that a save can end.	
Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant	
Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+7)	
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+5)	
Equipment hide armor	

Appendix II: Zithiruun, the Broken General

Once, he reigned supreme.

General Zithiruun was a great hero—one of the most respected military leaders of a militant race. From the great city of Tu'narath, he led armies of the githyanki on raids across the Astral Sea, and into a dozen different regions and kingdoms of the mortal realm. From the deck of the astral galleon *Siun'kara* or the back of Rathoraiax, his great red dragon steed, Zithiruun proved an unstoppable force—a champion among a race of champions. Even Vlaakith, the fearsome githyanki lich queen, acknowledged his greatness, heaped great praise upon him.

And then the great General Zithiruun took on a foe beyond even his own prowess.

That it was a dragon, a dragon far greater than Rathoraiax, everyone knows, but tales of the confrontation differ as to whether it was a black wyrm, one of the fearsome scourge dragons, or something else entirely. But while not everyone knows precisely what it was Zithiruun faced, everyone knows what happened as a result.

A hideous burst of something—acid, perhaps, or pure necrotic energy—ripped the life from the red dragon Rathoraiax, shredding flesh and obliterating entire portions of the beast. And it was this attack that felled Zithiruun as well. It stripped the strength from his limbs, rotted bits of flesh and even weakened bone. Any lesser warrior would have died in that hideous moment, but the general clung to life through sheer force of stubborn, malignant will.

It took years for Zithiruun to retrain and reinvigorate his broken body. Even today, he is a shadow of what he once was—weaker in body, far less sound in mind. His own people have all but turned their backs on him; though his great achievements prevented them from executing or exiling him utterly, they scorn his weakness and hold him in contempt for allowing himself and his mount to be so soundly defeated. Today, Zithiruun serves as a lowly operative of Tu'narath's forces and he leads only lesser warriors into battle while answering to and obeying githyanki who would once have feared even to speak in his presence.

Zithiruun's native powers have mutated through his years of effort as he attempted to reinvigorate his body at the expense of his mental prowess. The ambition all githyanki share has been subsumed by a burning need to prove himself and to regain the position and the respect that were once his by right—even as he nurses a resentful hatred of the very people whose adulation he so desperately craves.

Appearance

Zithiruun has been large for a githyanki, but since the destruction and atrophy of much of his musculature, he now appears almost impossibly tall and gaunt. Mixed with and attached to the traditional leathers of his people, he wears a contraption of braces and harnesses, constructed of leather straps and iron joints. These braces, supported at his shoulders and by a strap across his chest, run the length of his left arm and left leg, as well as a portion of his right leg. It is the straps that give those limbs rigidity; without them, they could scarcely move, and not support his weight. This harness also grants him full mobility; charged with both magic and psychic energy, it permits him motion and grants him strength he would otherwise lack.

His flesh clings tightly to his skeleton and puckers away from old wounds, exposing muscle and even charred bone. His left cheek gapes open, revealing a bit of metal plate that replaces a fragment of skull. A leather strap holds the left side of his jaw in place, replacing obliterated muscle.

He appears weak indeed, and in some ways he truly is. Yet Zithiruun wields his great silver saber with an astonishing, impossible precision, and his eyes burn with loathing and ambition to shame even the other githyanki.

Zithiruun, the Broken General	**Level 14 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,000
Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9	
HP 280; **Bloodied** 140	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 26; **Reflex** 29; **Will** 28	
Resist psychic 10	
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects)	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Silver Saber** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.	
⊛ **Thrown Saber** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Ranged 5/10 if thrown; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage. *Special:* If thrown, the weapon returns to Zithiruun's hand immediately after the attack is resolved.	
⸸ **Silver Barrage** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Zithiruun makes two *silver saber* attacks.	
⸸ **Silver Flurry** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
Zithiruun makes up to 2 attacks, each against a different target; he can shift 2 squares before the first attack, between each attack, and after the final attack; +19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage plus 2d8 psychic damage.	
Psionic Aim (immediate reaction when an ally within 5 squares misses with an attack; encounter)	
The ally can reroll the attack, keeping the second result.	
Mind Over Body	
Due to the psionic energy of the harness and armor he wears, Zithiruun uses Charisma in place of Wisdom for determining hit points and Fortitude. (He still uses Constitution for other purposes such as Endurance checks.)	
Mind Shock ✦ **Charm**	
Whenever Zithiruun damages a target with his *silver saber*, *thrown saber*, *silver flurry*, or *silver barrage* attacks, the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of Zithiruun's next turn.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; at-will)	
Zithiruun can fly 5 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic	
Skills History +16, Insight +14	
Str 6 (+5) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+9)	
Con 6 (+5)* **Int** 19 (+11) **Cha** 20 (+12)	
*See *mind over body*	
Equipment: Hide armor and body harness, two silver sabers	

Development

Zithiruun burns with shame and resentment, even as he scrambles to fulfill the orders of his superiors. Where he once commanded legions, he now leads only a handful of soldiers. He who charted the course of entire wars now understands only his part in larger strategies. Yet, though he aches to turn on those who would dare command him, he knows that through obedience lies his only hope of regaining the honor and position he craves.

The Broken General is a tactical genius, but his once renowned patience and cunning are impeded by his ever-growing temper. Zithiruun frequently flies into a rage at his subordinates for the slightest failure or perceived disobedience, transforming his resentment for those above into punishment for those below. The strap that replaces one of his jaw muscles prevents him from opening his mouth wide, forcing him to eat soft, almost dainty morsels of food and occasionally to slur his words. Zithiruun's speech is fully intelligible most of the time, but on those rare occasions when he garbles a word, he blames others for their failure to comprehend.

Despite this temper, however, Zithiruun remains a consummate planner and a terror in combat, fully capable of leading his small teams to victory in even the most complex strategies. Zithiruun can also use his reputation for mad rage to his advantage, often faking a tantrum to make others underestimate his ability to scheme, to listen, and to advance his own agenda.

Zithiruun's Tactics

Zithiruun prefers to fight alongside his mount Rathoraiax. He sweeps through his foes, opening with *silver barrage* if they greatly outnumber him and making use of his *mind shock* ability to stay mobile. If hard pressed, he flies to Rathoraiax's back and tries to stay at range, using distance attacks.

Despite his burning desire to prove himself, Zithiruun's hatred for other githyanki means that he's ill-disposed to sacrifice himself for their goals. Thus, he's willing to retreat from combat if things go poorly, even abandoning other githyanki allies.

Rathoraiax	**Level 13 Elite Brute**
Large natural animate (dragon, undead)	XP 1,600
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 328; **Bloodied** 164	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 29; **Reflex** 22; **Will** 24	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 4, fly 8 (clumsy)	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
Melee 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone if it is Large size or smaller.	
⸸ **Savage Fury** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⁞⁞)	
Rathoraiax makes two claw attacks.	
⸸ **Tail Crush** (minor; at-will)	
Reach 2; prone targets only; +14 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 damage.	
✧ **Breath of the Grave** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Necrotic, Poison**	
Close blast 5; +14 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 6 poison and necrotic damage, plus target takes ongoing 10 poison and necrotic damage and is weakened (save ends both).	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 9 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+9)	
Con 24 (+13) **Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 3 (+2)	

Rathoraiax

As a sign of his shame, Zithiruun was never granted the honor of a new dragon mount. Rather, he must make do with the animated body of Rathoraiax. This is yet another insult that burns in Zithiruun's craw, yet he's too intelligent a fighter to abandon a useful weapon purely out of spite.

Rathoraiax is clearly dead; most of his scales are a dull, rotten gray, gleaming with a faint red only in the brightest light. Many are missing completely, revealing desiccated, leathery skin. The entire top half of Rathoraiax's snout was destroyed in the attack that slew him. This left behind a "shelf" of his lower jaw sticking out from beneath the broken skull around his eyes, fangs protruding upward, and a dull, dead tongue lashing slowly above.

Rathoraiax's Tactics

Rathoraiax lumbers into combat and seeks to pound its foes into the earth. After a few rounds of combat (or earlier, if Zithiruun orders it to do so), it looks for an opportunity to catch a handful of foes in its *breath of the grave* attack. Rathoraiax is relatively mindless and fights to the death unless ordered to retreat.

Zithiruun Lore

The following information can be obtained with a successful History check. (In addition, see the standard githyanki lore, acquired with a Nature check, in the *Monster Manual*.)

DC 25: General Zithiruun was a great military leader and hero to the githyanki of Tu'narath. It's said that he was crippled and his mount slain in a battle against a sort of mighty dragon or fiend. Rumors disagree on whether he still lives and what position he might hold (if any) among the weakness-intolerant githyanki.

HEROIC
1–10

Touch of Madness

by Robert J. Schwalb

First Installment of The Tear of Ioun Series

Beyond the mortal world, somewhere outside the bounds of the Astral Sea, the Far Realm yawns immeasurable. Beyond the reality of gods and mortals, this plane is a realm of contradictions, a mad place of fevered creation checked only by pointless extinction. The Outside is a sea of diseased possibilities, where the stuff of madness seethes in a soup of the incomprehensible and the unnamable—shuddering, squirming, and sentient.

illustrations by Ryan Barger ✦ cartography by Kyle S. Hunter

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As long as they remain beyond the reaches of the mortal world, the conscious creations of the Far Realm and all their insanity pose no risk to civilization. Yet, ever does the Outside seek to spill into Creation, bulging outward to force its nightmare essence into the mortal world. Aberrant creatures infest the mortal realm, spreading their corruption, breeding, consuming, and slaying—all to seize this world and remake it into their own perverse image.

Who sets out to learn the secrets of the Far Realm, to master its horrid powers ... ?

Who sets out to learn the secrets of the Far Realm, to master its horrid powers? Truly, such efforts are the province of the insane and the soulless. Each breaching of the planar bounds enables more of the Outside to ooze forth, weakening reality's integrity, threatening to sunder the divine work. Only the truly mad seek such an end, and there is no shortage of the truly mad. These accursed few cast aside all caution to embrace the sheer horror of the Far Realm so they can bathe themselves in its dreadful splendor.

"Touch of Madness" is the first installment of *The Tear of Ioun*, a three-part campaign arc for the *D&D* game. It is designed to challenge five 10th-level characters.

Adventure Background

Long ago, Ioun entrusted humanity with a sacred gift. She handed down several fist-sized stones, each one shining like a miniature sun and filled with knowledge. Ioun's worshipers established orders of knights and scholars to protect and study the stones. The Kaorti was one such order, and their name has become a curse.

Ioun commands her mortal servants to pick up knowledge in all forms and disseminate it. Rather than hoard this learning, Ioun's servants awaken mortal minds, enlightening all with perfect understanding. Although all Ioun's priests cleave to these tenets, even the most fanatical of them understands that some knowledge is too wicked to be freely circulated. Thus, in their search for learning, Ioun's priests concealed certain tomes and scrolls within holy places. There the texts remain available to those who want to study them, but the existence of such disturbing information is never advertised.

For some of Ioun's priests, this tactic felt like a concession to Vecna and his secretive ways. These zealots believed all knowledge, no matter how dangerous, should be free. Leading this reckless charge were the Kaorti, a faction of scholars charged with guarding the largest and most powerful Ioun stone of them all, a shining teardrop-shaped relic known as the *Tear of Ioun*. Volarn, a charismatic young man of exceptional talent, led this society. Through his obsession with forbidden texts, he carried his fellows to the brink of annihilation and beyond.

Scrolls of Tireon

In addition to other functions, Ioun's temples serve as libraries. Those who had authority over the allocation of knowledge chose the Kaorti temple library to house dangerous writings. The temple was considered particularly holy, positioned as it was in the mountains upon the actual grave of Estered, a prophet of Ioun.

Volarn spent his time examining these writings, their toxic mysteries clouding his judgment and darkening his soul. As he delved, he happened upon several strange scrolls. The cramped writing, strange diagrams, and bizarre schematics for stranger devices drew him in and revealed to him the wonders of the Far Realm.

... Only the truly mad seek such an end, and there is no shortage of the truly mad.

Mild curiosity evolved into unhealthy obsession as Volarn learned more and more. The writer, Tireon, an eladrin mystic, created a pinhole into the Far Realm. What Tireon saw filled him with dread, so he sealed the wound with potent wards. However, a diminutive creature slipped free—something like a tadpole, but fleshier and with numerous tentacles. When it touched Tireon's flesh, it burrowed inside, awakening strange sensations and hallucinations, filling Tireon's consciousness with a way to erect a permanent portal. Whether Tireon succeeded, none can say. His writing drifted deeper into madness until it became incomprehensible.

Volarn was intrigued, though, reading and rereading to learn all he could. He shared his findings with his closest colleagues. With their support, he turned the entire temple to the task of recreating the ancient experiment. Those who disagreed vanished, so those who harbored doubts learned to keep these misgivings secret.

It took a decade, but the Kaorti completed the device described in the scrolls, constructing a massive orrery, a clockwork machine that marks the passage of dominions as they travel unseen and unending paths through the Astral Sea. All was ready as described in the Scrolls of Tireon, but nothing worked.

Volarn realized the orrery needed a power source so he used the *Tear of Ioun*, placing it in the heart of the machine. As he pulled his hands away, the orbs shuddered, rotating around the shining artifact. They accelerated, and an arc of light lanced forth from the stone only to vanish into what seemed to be a fold in time and space. Volarn and his fellows donned their gear and stepped into the squirming hole, thinking themselves more than prepared.

The rift's corruption bathed the *Tear of Ioun*, which began to gather the loosed power of the Far Realm. As the orrery picked up speed and the gateway appeared, black fissures crawled across the *Tear's* surface. Its light ebbed as the last of the Kaorti stepped through the portal, tumbling into the Far Realm.

A moment later, the eldritch power failed, and the *Tear*'s weird movements snapped shut the hole in reality. It did so with such force it blew apart the orrery, sundering the tower and sealing the reckless scholars in the Far Realm.

Kaorti Reborn

The explorers, trapped and adrift in a churning sea of nameless horror, found ghastly tendrils burrowing inside them, polluting them with the dreadful effect of the Far Realm. One by one, their forms bloomed bizarre corruptions. As time passed, the Kaorti bore torment after torment until their minds snapped, their identities lost in a storm of madness. Only one goal remained true within them: They yearned to return to the mortal world and share the "wonders" of the Far Realm.

Malachi's Dreams

Centuries after the Kaorti vanished, Nerath collapsed into ruin. The *Tear of Ioun* passed into myth, and no one remembered the Kaorti or the purpose of the ruined tower in the heights of the nearby mountains. Although the passing of years concealed ancient sins, not all were done with them. In the wastes, the alienist conjurer Malachi dreamed.

Malachi did not know he was the last living scion of Volarn. To his imprisoned ancestor, Malachi was the last hope of Kaorti escape. Touching Malachi's mind while he slept, Volarn reached beyond the planar gulfs to coax his descendant with the Far Realm vistas and bounteous power. Volarn seduced Malachi, luring him to the brink of insanity to make the perfect pawn.

Volarn demanded Malachi construct a new orrery to release the trapped Kaorti from their prison. Malachi set out to follow in his ancestor's steps, using slaves and servants to complete the task, but he knew he lacked the *Tear of Ioun*. Thus, Malachi sent his servants forth to recover the stone.

Enter the Stormcrows

Malachi's servants scoured the land for the hidden relic. Of these agents, Cylus proved both the most cunning and the most craven. He found the Kaorti stronghold not far from a small town named Wellspring. Rather than pluck the stone from the tower himself, he hired a band of mercenaries—the Stormcrows—that had a reputation for taking any job for which the pay was ample. Gold blinded them to the risks, and they set out to retrieve the item.

The Stormcrows found the tower, fought its inhabitants, and located the *Tear*. However, the stone's corruption overwhelmed them, warping their flesh and rending their minds. Elomir, their leader, decided to serve the stone and protect it. There the Stormcrows remained, worshiping the *Tear of Ioun* as if it were a god. As blood sacrifices filled the stone with hideous evil, the *Tear* called to the darkness, luring more horrors from beyond to pay it homage.

Unexpected Thief

Back in Wellspring, Cylus waited for the Stormcrows' return, unaware of what had happened in the mountains' heights. As he rested, delighted in his own cleverness, he had the singular misfortune to encounter Shathrax, a mind flayer. The vile creature had been plotting to enslave the human population and make servants of them all. As Shathrax sank its tentacles into Cylus's mind, it learned of the *Tear* from the memories it consumed. Shathrax became aware of the item's powers and connections to the Far Realm, and the mind flayer knew the *Tear* presented an excellent opportunity to put diabolical plans in action.

The mind flayer sent its own mercenaries to recover the relic. Creeping into the tower, they slipped in and snatched the artifact. The stone wailed in outrage, causing the place to erupt. Though most of the thieves died, one managed to escape with the *Tear* and deliver it to Shathrax.

Adventure Synopsis

The Stormcrows, responding to the psychic cry from the stone, dispatched a force to retrieve it. The attackers descend on Wellspring, slaughtering and destroying in the search for their treasure. PCs can come to the town's defense and repel the horde. A priestess of Ioun then turns to the heroes to find the item the monsters were seeking.

From the recovering town, the heroes cross the wilderness to the Kaorti Temple. The trail ends at a ruined tower overlooking a deep ravine. Inside the tower, the heroes must overcome the terrible creatures in their search. In the end, they find the relic has been stolen.

Hooks

Since the adventure begins in the town of Wellspring, you need to come up with a reason for why the player characters are there in the first place. You can use any one of the following adventure hooks or come up with one better suited for your campaign.

Between Adventures: Wellspring is an ideal place to purchase supplies, train, and relax. The town is also large enough for the PCs to acquire needed ingredients for rituals or to research other mysteries involved with past or future adventures.

Rumors of Adventure: Situated as it is on the frontier, Wellspring is a place from which adventurers can mount expeditions into the Harrow Wood and the Kadagast Mountains. Rumor holds that old portals to the Feywild still stand in the forest, and portals to darker and stranger lands lay in the mountains. In addition, the peaks are home to ruins of more than one empire—Nerath and Bael Turath.

Holiness: For the worshipers of Ioun, Wellspring is a holy site. At this location, Estered received the blessing of the goddess and founded an order dedicated to protecting her gift. As a result, pilgrims come to Wellspring to pay homage to the saint at what they believe is his tomb at the center of town. A servant of Ioun among the PCs might receive a vision about the evil growing in Wellspring, or one of Ioun's servants might visit the PCs and task them with uncovering the meaning of similar visions.

Wellspring

Wellspring nestles in a valley, astride a river known as the Chill and between two arms of the Kadagast Mountains. The town's folk are farmers and fishers. Cultivated farmland surrounds the community. Less than two miles away is Kord's Tankard, a deep lake fed by runoff from the mountains. A Nerathi road winds down from a northern pass, heading south and splitting into a westward arm. Paved with cut stone, the roads still see caravans from the north.

The most common travelers, though, are pilgrims devoted to the deity Ioun and her saint, Estered. Each year brings another band of devout to the town's center square. They pay their respects under an

ancient statue of Estered, under which the mystic's tomb is hidden.

Wellspringers, famous skeptics, can't help but wonder if the statue actually marks the grave. They keep their doubts to themselves, since the pilgrims play an important part in Wellspring's economy. To the pious, Wellspringers are gracious hosts quick to doff their caps to the statue.

Places of Interest

Estered's Square: Paved in cobblestones and dominated by the worn statue of Estered's robed form, the square is the center of the town's activity. When not playing host to a festival, it functions as a market. Wellspring's major businesses ring the square, and traders set up stalls in the area.

Mindspire: Locals claim this ancient temple stood long before the town did. Its old stones, covered in strange sigils just hidden by the ivy, suggest some truth to its legends. Multicolored pieces of glass in a rainbow of colors peek out from the mortar so when the sun hits it, the temple sparkles. Two massive brass doors serve as its only entrance, and inside is a massive amphitheater around a central pit where a worn altar stands.

WELLSPRING

A frontier town, Wellspring is surrounded by rugged and dangerous territory. Beyond the riverfront square, narrow streets wind through tightly packed homes, some of which rise two or three stories. The roads are cobbled and clean. Four bridges allow passage over the various waters that run through the town, and a steep wall encircles the entire place.

Population: Approximately 1,000; another 1,000 live in the countryside within a mile of the town. Humans and halflings are common, but all peoples are represented here.

Government: The human Lord Garen Criswell is the hereditary ruler of the town. He is in charge of the town's justice, defense, and laws. From among the guilders and commoners, the lord appoints a town council to handle running the town's public business.

Defense: The town guard has forty fulltime warriors. Castle Criswell is their barracks. Lord Criswell can muster 200 militia.

Inns: Inn on the Square, various riverfront hostels.

Taverns: Blue Plate (part of the Inn on the Square), various riverfront dives.

Supplies: Gunderson's General Store.

Temple: Mindspire (Temple of Ioun; no priest), various shrines.

Castle Criswell: Rivaling the old temple of Ioun, Castle Criswell stands on a sharp rise overlooking the southern branch of the Chill. A fifty-foot tower dominates the castle, and the colors of Lord Criswell fly from its conical roof. His standard depicts a rearing brown bear flanked by two downward-pointing swords. The rest of the castle consists of a two-story house and two smaller outbuildings used as servants' quarters and a garrison, surrounded by a low curtain wall.

Guild District: Three powerful guilds—Bakers, Ironworkers, and Tanners—control the town's industry. Each guild oversees a variety of related industries, and they set the prices in the town. They place representatives near Lord Criswell to ensure the noble remembers who pads his coffers.

Town Hall: Facing the square, the town hall is a building of wood and stone roofed in slate shingles. Narrow windows look out over the square. Most of this building consists of the audience hall, where commoners voice grievances to the lord, do business, and hold town meetings. Weddings are common here as well.

Low District: Although definitely home to Wellspring's poorer citizens, this district holds the homes of commoners who work in the market or Guild District. Not destitute by any means, folk here are content with their simple lives.

Riverfront District: Both sides of the western Chill are crowded with warehouses and hostels, all of which cater to the merchant sailors who travel from other settlements to do business. This district is the area of Wellspring most troubled by crime.

Common District: Given over to commerce, middle class housing, and a scattering of shrines, this ward is a safe if dull part of town.

High District: Named for the hills rippling out from the eastern shore of the Chill, this is the wealthy part of Wellspring, made so by merchants and successful guilders. With wide streets, several cultivated parks, and higher-end shops, the High District is a bright spot of prosperity in the darkness of the frontier.

Getting Started

The adventure begins once you and the players have worked out a reason for their being in Wellspring. Give the characters a bit of time to settle in and recuperate from any previous expeditions. They're likely to be at the Blue Plate.

To begin, read:

Light rain has done nothing to disperse the pilgrims crowding the square near Wellspring's massive temple to Ioun. All are praying or looking in awe at the old statue rising from the square's center. Nearby, merchants hawk baubles and food.

A sudden scream turns into a chorus as citizens and pilgrims alike start to flee something they've seen.

Encounter: 1. Grell Attack, page 90.

Solemn Priestess

After the combat, the PCs notice a striking woman. She stands out among the people and guards gathering in the square.

When the PCs see this person, read:

A statuesque young woman moves among the wounded, kneeling and tending their injuries. Her long brown hair drapes down onto her blue robes, which are trimmed in symbols. A symbol worked in clear crystal and silver hangs about her neck.

Religion DC 5: *The symbols are all the holy symbol of Ioun.*

This is Deirdre, a priestess of Ioun, who has come to Wellspring on a mission. She witnessed the entire fight, and she intends to speak with the PCs once she has seen to all the victims. If interrupted, she introduces herself and enlists the PCs' help with the wounded. After the task is done, she's ready to talk.

When Deirdre speaks, she begins:
"I must thank you for defending these pilgrims and the town. I, like these others, have come to Wellspring on a pilgrimage.

"I fear you have faced just the vanguard of what is to come, however. These monsters were looking for something, and you stopped them."

The PCs might have understood the grell, so give the players a chance to speak up about the "Tear." Otherwise, Deirdre mentions it by its short name, "the Tear." The characters probably have a few questions. Likely questions and answers follow.

Is that temple yours? *"It is the house of Ioun, but I do not claim it. It is vacant."*

Pilgrimage? *"Pious travelers come here to visit this site and its statue."*

Whom does this statue represent? *"That is Estered, a saint of our faith. Some say he ascended to the Astral Sea, where he serves Ioun still." (History or Religion DC 20 confirms this.)*

What did he do? *"According to legend, he received the knowledge directly from Ioun. Using this lore, he fashioned the first magic stones that hold the goddess's power. He also founded an order of priests to uphold her faith in these parts." (History or Religion DC 20 confirms this.)*

Where were you during the fight? *"I am no warrior. I am a teacher and healer."*

Any idea what this "Tear" is? Do you know what they were seeking? *"Yes. The Tear of Ioun. But that legendary relic was never in Wellspring. It was stored away in the Kaorti Temple long ago, before the fall of Nerath."*

Kaorti Temple? *"Indeed. The Tear of Ioun is said to hold valuable and ancient knowledge. Kaorti Temple was its place of keeping. The temple was said to stand in the west, beyond the Harrow Wood in the Kadagast Mountains."*

Once the players pause in their questions, Deirdre steers the conversation back to the matter at hand.

"I suspect this is but a taste of what is to come. Doubtless, this town has its defenders, but they proved ineffectual against this small force. When and if the real enemy arrives, they do not stand a chance. Friends, someone must find the Tear of Ioun before these monstrosities do so. The only place I know to look is the Kaorti Temple. Will you go?"

The characters probably have more questions.

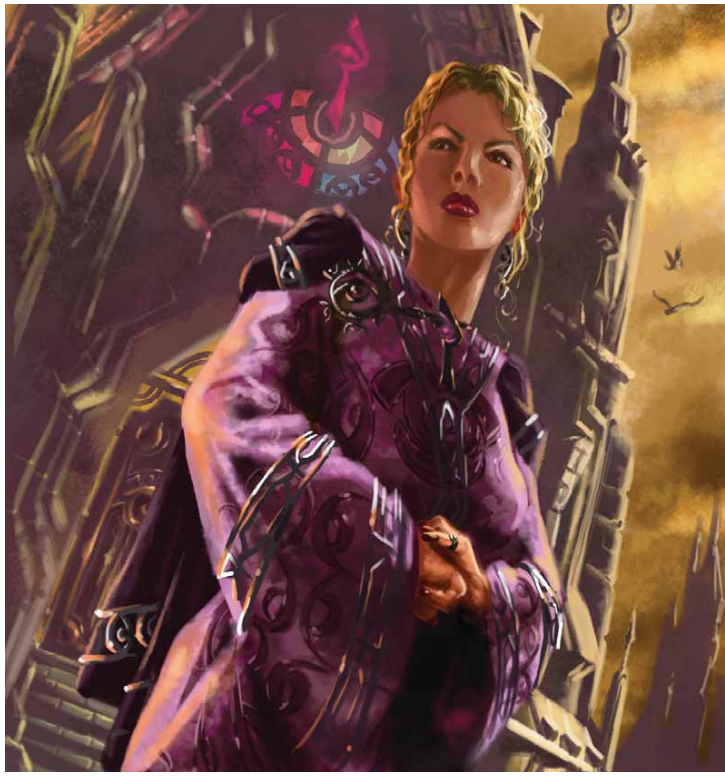
What will you do with it? *"One cannot appease evil. If these monsters are indeed searching for the Tear, their finding it can be good neither for these folk nor for us. Once it is recovered, we should see it safely to another house of Ioun."*

What else do you know of the Kaorti Temple? *"It fell before Nerath crumbled. The hubris of a scholar led those within the temple astray. He sought to explore mysteries beyond his comprehension. With him, all those of the Kaorti Temple perished. The place has been abandoned since, for the wars that destroyed Nerath came soon after. It was a black day for our faith.*

"The locals who know of it, brave hunters mostly, call the temple ruins Forlorn Tower. I've never seen the ruin, but apparently the structure is a spire much like the temple here, only larger."

What do you offer for our service? *"I have nothing but the thanks of my fellows in Ioun and, no doubt, the lord of Wellspring. I do know rituals that uncover lost lore and remove afflictions of the body, mind, and soul. I am at your disposal for such rituals, if you need them.*

Deirdre can perform Cure Disease, Remove Affliction, and Speak with Dead (Heal +12, Religion +11). She's also willing to part with 300 gp worth of residuum if the PCs wish to perform their own rituals. If the PCs don't take the residuum initially, Deirdre gives it as a reward when the PCs return successful.



Lord Criswell

If the PCs seek out Lord Criswell, the lord is unnerved by the grell attack. With Deirdre at their sides as a witness to their bravery, the PCs can convince Criswell to grant them access to mundane equipment they might need. If the PCs force the issue of a reward, Criswell offers them 500 gp each. He mentions, however, that the funds come from town coffers used to help maintain the town.

Criswell sends the PCs off with that, and he might grant other rewards if they return successful in their task. If they didn't ask for a reward, the PCs receive Lord Criswell's money as a gift for their successful foray. Meanwhile, Criswell shores up his defenses to make ready for the next attack.

Refusing the Call

Such callousness builds the foundation for another, nastier attack. After two days, or one day if the grell philosopher escaped, another force consisting of one of the Stormcrows (choose one) and four more grells descends on the community, this time looking for the PCs.

Treasure

The treasure in this adventure isn't defined specifically. It's for you to decide what the PCs find, based on their wish lists. Characters who start this adventure right at 10th level should be about halfway to 12th level by the end of the adventure. If that's true for your group, you need to give out all the parcels for level 10, and about half those for 11th level—or fifteen parcels. See the *DMG*, page 127, for information on those parcels.

The adventure suggests where you might place parcels, including specific guidelines in each encounter in which treasure appears. Generally, you might wish to place some of the magic items with NPC villains. If you like, let the NPC in question use the item against the PCs.

What follows is a general list of where parcels appear in the adventure, along with what they're likely to be. Take a few minutes to assign parcels before running the adventure, reserving 11th-level parcels for the later encounters.

Treasure Locations

Wellspring: Reward from Lord Criswell and Deirdre (2,800 gp; Level 10, parcel 5).

Encounter 2: One parcel (magic item)

Encounter 4: Two parcels (one magic item; one monetary)

Encounter 5: One parcel (magic item)

Encounter 6: One parcel (monetary)

Encounter 7: One parcel (magic item)

Encounter 9: Two parcels (one magic item; one monetary)

Encounter 10: One parcel (magic item)

Encounter 11: Two parcels (both monetary)

Encounter 12: Three parcels (one magic item; two monetary)

Quests

The major quest of this adventure is to find and eliminate the threat to Wellspring. That's a 10th-level quest worth 2,500 XP when completed. The adventure also has a minor quest.

Rescue the Stormcrows: The Stormcrows aren't nice people, but their current condition isn't exactly their fault. The PCs can decide to try to save the Stormcrows after seeing one of the mercenaries. They might instead come to this conclusion after they interact with Denva. The PCs can come up with ways to render the other Stormcrows harmless and cure at least some of them.

If the PCs want to cure a Stormcrow, doing so is a minor quest (level 10; 500 XP divided among the PCs). A Remove Affliction ritual works, but none of these NPCs can be cured in or near the tower. Further, the ritual must be successfully performed four times to cure each Stormcrow completely. The NPC can pay for the ritual if the PCs take him or her back to Wellspring. Deirdre is also willing to help.

The trip with Stormcrows in tow is unpleasant—they suffer seizures and horrible fits during the trip. In addition, the Harrowfolk (see that section) won't like that the PCs are helping the "false ones." The characters might have to convince the Harrowfolk that the Stormcrows can be cured.

What becomes of the Stormcrows after the PCs help in this way is up to you. The Stormcrows recognize that they owe the PCs, and big. Suggestions are given in encounters where Stormcrows appear. At the very least, the PCs can keep any treasure they acquired from the Stormcrows.

Snooping Around

Before setting out, the adventurers might want to look around town and do a bit of investigating. Each of the following entries corresponds to a different skill. When a character makes a successful check, the following information is revealed as well as all information from lower DCs.

NPCs of Wellspring

If you prefer to roleplay the search for information in more detail, you can expand them into interactions with any of the following NPCs or characters of your creation. Encounters with locals give the PCs a chance to forge alliances, gain additional information for future adventures, develop minor quests, and so on. If the PCs need help, one of these NPCs might be able to help.

Croetus

The Wizard of Wellspring is an accomplished hedge mage and well versed in matters concerning spells and magical creatures. He lives in the Low District, in a round house with a conical roof.

Occupation and History: Croetus came to Wellspring five years ago after fleeing a southern city for a scandalous tryst with a merchant prince's wife. He has kept a low profile in the town ever since, watchful for assassins he's sure lurk behind every shadow.

Physical Description: Croetus is a tall, thin human male with short salt-and-pepper hair and a long mustache drooping down either side of his mouth. He has big eyes and a hawkish nose. Always fashionable, he wears a black silk shirt and matching breeches held up by a wide leather belt with a silver clasp. Croetus twirls his mustache when thoughtful or nervous.

Values and Motivations: Croetus is a shameless flirt and lecher. He dotes on ladies of any race or age. In spite of this failing, he is good at what he does. Croetus is more inclined to help any group that has one or more female members.

History	
DC	Result
10	Founded centuries ago, Wellspring is a bright point of civilization in an otherwise untamed wilderness.
15	Many of the older families can trace their lineage to Nerath, the dead empire that once claimed these lands.
20	Estered, a particularly famous mage and theologian, lived and worked in Wellspring long ago. All that remains of his legacy in Wellspring is the statue raised in his honor. It's said that Estered worked out of a secret laboratory in Wellspring.
22	The lands around Wellspring were once part of the ancient empire of Bael Turath, a powerful and long-dead civilization brought low by its filthy pacts with devils.
25	An old legend relating to this region deals with a cabal of mystics and mages who tore open reality to unlock the secrets of the Far Realm.
30	Those mystics were the Kaorti.

Nature	
DC	Result
10	Wellspring sits in a small valley created by two arms of the Kadagast Mountains. Moisture trapped by the peaks keeps the valley vibrant and green, with summers wet and winters mild.
15	The Harrow Wood is home to bands of half-orcs who tolerate Wellspring. These folk occasionally trade with the locals, bringing pelts, woodcarvings, and the occasional strange relic. Wellspringers call these people Harrowfolk.

Religion	
DC	Result
15	Worship of Ioun has deep roots in these parts, dating to well before the rise and fall of Nerath.
20	The Kaorti were a sect of Ioun worshipers tasked with storing relics and knowledge.
30	The Kaorti fell from grace by toying with twisted knowledge. They destroyed themselves in a misguided experiment.

Streetwise	
DC	Result
5	The monsters struck a few outlying farms before invading Wellspring.
10	People have been disappearing for weeks. The missing citizens include Reese, a baker; Jurival, a friar; and Simon, a young son of local merchants. (This clue provides dead-ends for now, but "Depths of Madness" explores this rash of vanishings in detail.)
15	A few weeks ago, a group of mercenaries known as the Stormcrows set out for the mountains. The group included five people: an elf, an eladrin, two humans, and a dwarf. They asked many questions about the region and its history, especially about the ruins in the mountains.
20	The Stormcrows are "money for might" sellswords. No job is too low if the price is right. Their members are Elomir, a male elf swordsman, Garen, a male dwarf cutthroat, Shantaira, a female eladrin fire mage, Denva, a female human soldier, and Klaus, a male human wilderness scout.

Gerald Roy

Wellspring doesn't have much organized crime, but it does have is Gerald Roy, and he makes do. He's a regular at the Cast Die—a small, dingy gaming hall and tavern in the Riverside District.

Occupation: Roy runs a small smuggling operation created to funnel stolen merchandise to southern communities. He rarely robs locals, preferring to target travelers making their way to or from the town. As a contact, Gerald is helpful in any situation requiring Streetwise.

Description: An outgoing human male in his thirties, Gerald has shaggy brown hair and a matching beard flecked with red and gray. He's rough, vulgar, and frank. In spite of this and his portliness, Gerald is a charmer. He has a reputation as a rake throughout the Wellspring.

Values and Motivations: Gerald is lazy. He steals to survive and still avoid real work. For all his immorality, he's not malicious. He even has the graces to be guilty about his career when he's drunk.

Gerald is suspicious of anyone he doesn't know. He might be aware of the PCs and their recent adventures, but that doesn't mean he trusts them. Connections mean a lot to Gerald.

Master Vyen

Master Vyen knows a great deal about Wellspring's history. He lives in a stone house in the High District, where he tutors highborn children, teaching them to read and write.

Occupation and History: Vyen is the fourth son of a minor noble in a city far to the east. Given up to the Church of Ioun to become a priest, Vyen served there for a time. When he turned eighteen, he quit the monastery and headed west, settling in Wellspring. A true scholar, he turned his keen mind to unearthing the secrets of this strange little town and its environs.

Physical Description: Vyen is fast approaching his fiftieth year. His hair has gone to white, and wrinkles cover his face. His watery-green eyes seem tired, but he can affect a smile when need be. He's most often found wearing comfortable brown robes and surrounded by his books. Master Vyen steeples his fingers when he talks.

Values and Motivations: If Vyen took one thing with him from his time as an acolyte, it was a thirst for knowledge. He cherishes his books and his learning, and he tries to impart the same zeal, with mixed results, to his students. He is friendly and helpful, reserving special kindness for other scholars.

On the Trail

PCs initially have little trouble following the grells' trail; wrecked farmsteads and corpses mark the way. The host came from the west.

West, beyond the farmland surrounding Wellspring, stretches the Harrow Wood, an old forest of mixed trees. Near the edge, the trees are thin with little underbrush, but the forest grows more tangled inside. Canopy blocks out the sun, making the forest dim even during the day, and gnarled roots make the footing treacherous. Strange mists swirl about the forest floor. For seasoned explorers, however, the forest environment itself offers little danger.

Harrow Wood

The PCs have two meaningful encounters in Harrow Wood. They might also have other encounters of your devising.

Eyes of Malachi

At some point during daylight, as the adventurers travel through the Harrow Wood, they stumble across the Eyes of Malachi. This band, sent by Malachi, searches the valley, moving through the woods to avoid attracting attention from Wellspring. Although they would rather conserve their resources, they fear the PCs are competition.

Encounter: 2. Eyes of Malachi, page 92.

Harrowfolk

Terrifying creatures live in the Harrow Wood. Folk live here anyway, avoiding the dangerous denizens of the wood and surviving in spite of the odds. The Harrowfolk, a tribe of half-orcs, are the foremost of these people.

Harrowfolk have lived in these woods for centuries, witnessing the rise and fall of Nerath. They have little use for the people of Wellspring, besides occasional trade, and they keep to themselves. As long as they and their way of life remain undisturbed, they are content to go their own way.

After the encounter with the Eyes of Malachi, if you feel the PCs need more information, aid, or just an interesting roleplaying encounter, the Harrowfolk come out into the open. They're interested in the PCs and their opposition to the Eyes of Malachi. The encounter is intended to be peaceful, but Harrowfolk statistics are provided just in case.

Harrowfolk as Enemies

Vaymeer and his fellows are here as local color and to aid the PCs, not fight them. If the PCs attack, the Harrowfolk make a fighting withdrawal as quickly as possible. Unless the PCs track them down and slay them, they receive no XP for attacking Vaymeer's band. After PC aggression, any passage through the Harrow Wood is likely to be fraught with guerilla attacks from the half-orcs. The Harrowfolk never engage the PCs directly after the initial altercation. Each guerilla attack ends after a round or two, when Harrowfolk forces disperse into the surrounding wood.

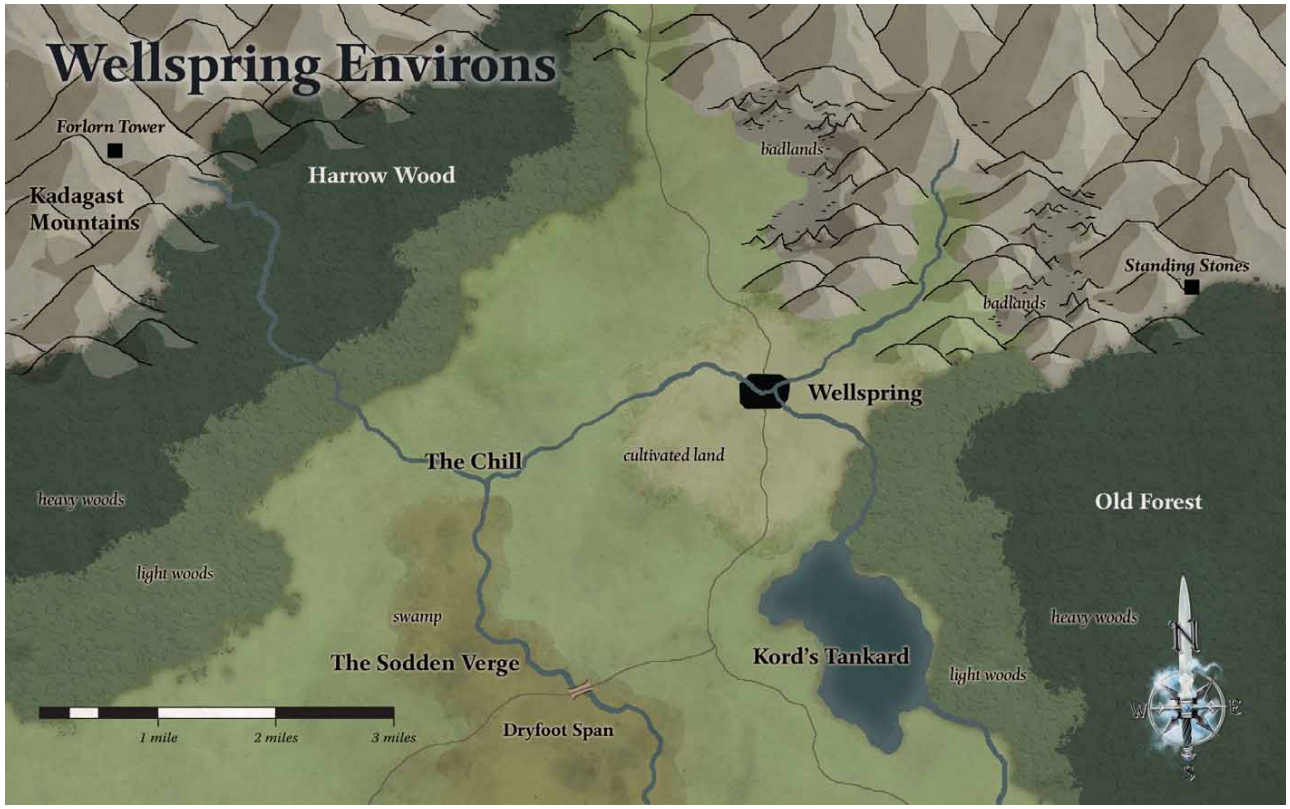
Vaymeer's Band

Vaymeer, a leader of the Harrowfolk, leads a scouting party in pursuit of the adventurers. PCs who succeed on DC 19 Perception checks hear the Harrowfolk approaching. Vaymeer reveals himself soon after that.

When Vaymeer approaches the PCs, read:
A massive man comes out of the trees, his hands held in a peaceful gesture. His features are broad, and his skin has a gray cast. Raven-colored hair hangs in braids from his head, and his sharp eyes are as dark. Feathers and totems decorate his hair and dark hide armor. He carries a greataxe on his back.

As he approaches, he says in accented Common, "I am Vaymeer of the Harrowfolk. Who are you, and what brings you to this place?"

Perception DC 17: *Other similar folk hang back among the dense trees, watching cautiously.*



Vaymeer is suspicious of the PCs at first. If the characters are polite, he relaxes. He answers questions, as shown below.

Why have you been following us? *To see what brings you to Harrow Wood. To learn if you are with them.*

Them? *Yes. Those who passed into the mountains awhile back, and those who sent the flying tentacles across the Harrow Wood. The false ones, like the ones you slew.*

Where did the flying tentacles come from? *(Vaymeer points toward the Forlorn Tower.) There. They serve the false ones.*

False Ones? *Interlopers like you. They traveled through the land weeks ago. They seemed true, but proved their falseness when they entered Forlorn Tower and did not come out again. Since that time, foul creatures have come into the wood. They slay without reason and poison the land with their filth.*

Do you know anything about the *Tear of Ioun*? *No, but our elders speak of a great evil that has long endured in the Forlorn Tower. Perhaps this is the grief of your goddess.*

If the PCs are respectful and truthful with Vaymeer, he offers to lead them to within sight of the Forlorn Tower. The Harrowfolk have no desire to enter the tower, but they can become allies of the PCs. Grant the PCs 100 XP each for dealing peacefully with the Harrowfolk.

Vaymeer **Level 11 Elite Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 1,200
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
HP 276; **Bloodied** 138
AC 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6 (8 while charging)
Action Points 1
⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 30); see also *savage cleave.*
↯ **Axe Reaction** (immediate reaction when an enemy hits or misses Vaymeer; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
Targets the triggering enemy; +18 vs. AC; 3d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 42); see also *savage cleave.*
Earth's Wellspring (minor; encounter)
Vaymeer gains 15 temporary hit points, and he ends any marked condition affecting him.
Furious Assault (free; encounter)
When Vaymeer hits an enemy, he can deal +1[W] damage with a weapon attack or +1d8 damage with a nonweapon attack.
Half-Orc Resilience
When first bloodied, Vaymeer gains 10 temporary hit points.
Savage Cleave
Whenever Vaymeer hits with a melee attack, he can make a melee basic attack against another adjacent enemy as a free action, taking -2 to the second attack roll.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Athletics +14, Endurance +10, Intimidate +10, Nature +11
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+8)
Equipment hide armor, greataxe

Harrowfolk Nature Priest **Level 9 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 400
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 74; **Bloodied** 37
AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22
Speed 6 (8 when charging)
⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.
Thorn Bolt (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.
Leeching Earth (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃)
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both).
Furious Assault (free; encounter)
When the half-orc hits an enemy, it can deal +1[W] damage with a weapon attack or +1d8 damage with a nonweapon attack.
Half-Orc Resilience
When first bloodied, the half-orc gains 5 temporary hit points.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +7, Nature +14
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, spear

4 Harrowfolk Hunters **Level 10 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 125
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Speed 6 (8 while charging)
⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 6 damage.
⊕ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 5 damage.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Str 17 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, spear, sheaf of 3 javelins

2 Harrowfolk Warriors **Level 8 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc XP 350 each
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 88; **Bloodied** 44
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20
Speed 6 (8 when charging)
⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.
⊕ **Handaxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10 or melee 1; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.
↯ **Chop Chop** (standard; at-will)
The Harrowfolk warrior makes a battleaxe attack and a handaxe attack, adding no +4 to the handaxe damage. The warrior can shift 2 squares, dividing them before, between, or after the attacks.
Hurling Charge (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
The Harrowfolk warrior makes a ranged handaxe attack followed by a charge attack.
Furious Assault (free; encounter)
When the half-orc hits an enemy, it can deal +1[W] damage with a weapon attack or +1d8 damage with a nonweapon attack.
Half-Orc Resilience
When first bloodied, the half-orc gains 5 temporary hit points.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +6, Nature +12
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, 3 handaxes

Kadagast Mountains

With or without the Harrowfolk, the PCs eventually come to the lower slopes of the Kadagast Mountains. Light forest covers the lower slopes and helps hide travelers from view. The higher PCs travel into the mountains, the more frequently they see twisted, mutated remains of malformed creatures, too corrupted by the *Tear of Ioun* to live.

Forlorn Tower

High in the Kadagast Mountains stands Forlorn Tower. Once an impregnable fortress-temple devoted to Ioun, the structure has been weakened by centuries of neglect and the constant force of water spilling from above. Great chunks of stone have tumbled into the ravine far below. Enough remains for a nest of aberrant creatures, drawn by the power of *Tear of Ioun*, to live and fester.

Tower Features

The tower stands on a shelf overlooking a deep ravine.

Walls: The walls are made from dark stone—cut into blocks measuring 2 feet by 3 feet—and mortared in place with crumbling cement. The exterior walls sag and lean, the blocks shifting in their seats. In places, they have eroded away completely to reveal the ruined interior; such holes in its outer walls offer access to any of the four levels. Climbing the walls requires DC 20 Athletics checks, while breaking through them requires a DC 33 Athletics check.

Ceilings: The ceilings are 30 feet high. They have collapsed in places, littering the floor with rubble and affording a good look at the level above. Periodically, a stone from the ceiling on one level slips free to shatter on the floor below. The fall is too infrequent for anyone to be struck, but regular enough to encourage caution.

Entrances: The primary entrance into the tower is through the double doors set in its southwestern face. However, large gaps in the walls allow characters to penetrate the tower by less conventional means.

Lighting: Gaps in the ceilings allow dim light to fill the place during the day. All locations are dark at night.

Noise: Creaking, groans, and the occasional falling rocks from the ceilings combine with the roar of the waterfall to impose a –4 penalty on Perception checks. Grimlocks instead halve their blindsight range.

Waterfall: A cascade spilling from 500 feet overhead has washed away the roof, cutting through the interior to spill down into the ravine from ground level. Be sure to describe the sound and visuals of the waterfall regularly, especially when the PCs can see it. Area 8 describes the falls in detail.

Defenses

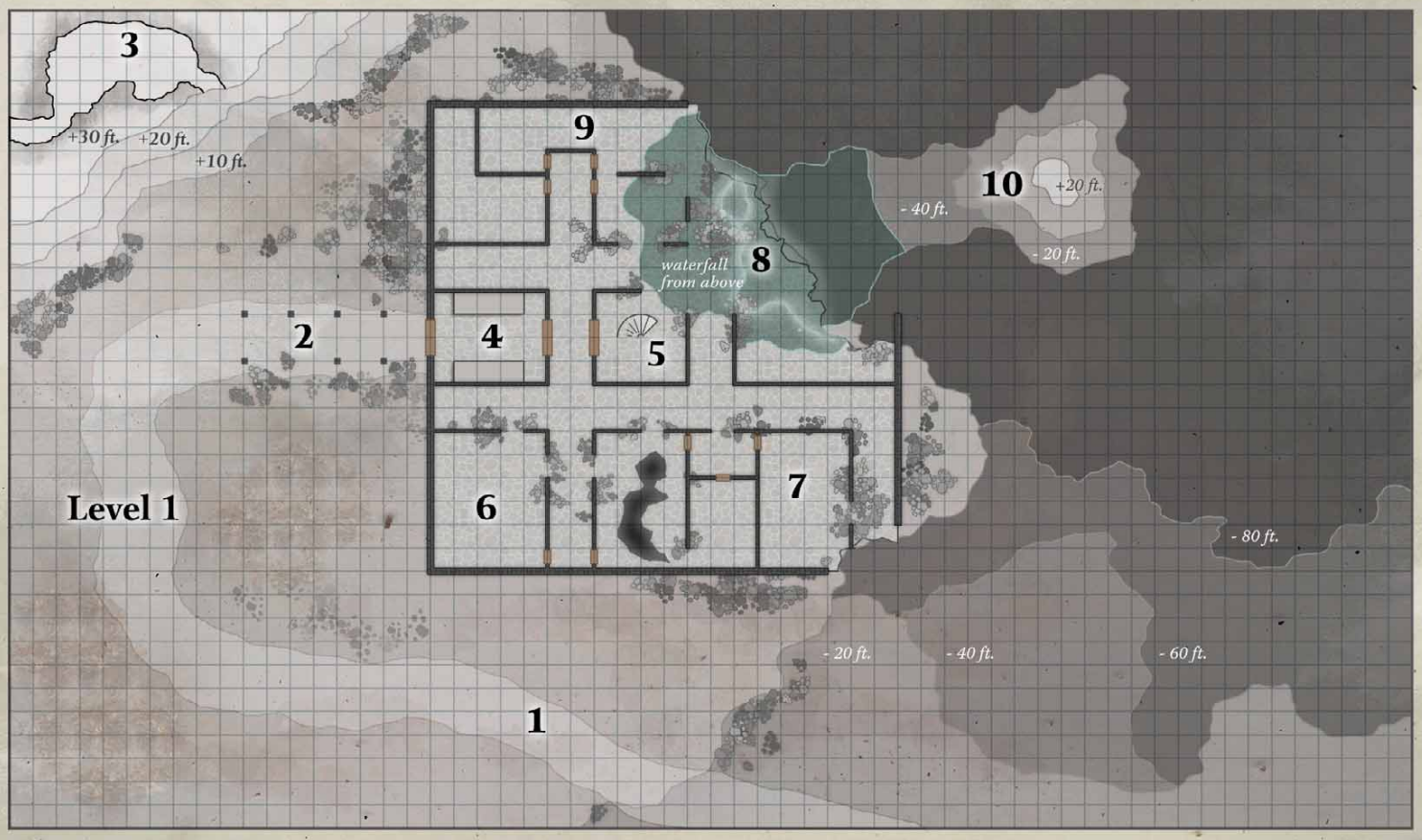
Forlorn Tower crawls with activity. The Stormcrows scatter throughout the tower along with a host of dread servants. After the Stormcrows became corrupted, they made an alliance with the grimlocks remaining in and near the tower, as well as other aberrant creatures attracted to the place.

The noise of the waterfall and distance combine to keep creatures from hearing combat in other areas. However, three patrols of three grimlock ambushers roam the first and second levels. Every hour the adventurers explore, they have a 20% chance of also encountering a patrol. Whenever the PCs have an encounter, they have a 10% chance of a grimlock patrol showing up within 2d4 rounds.

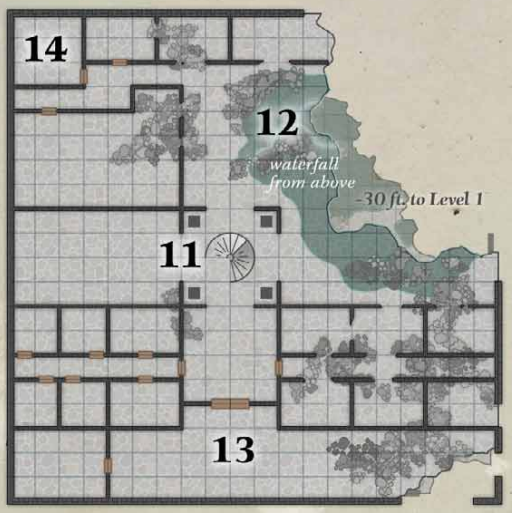
During the first foray into the tower, only three patrols are present. PCs can retreat from the tower, but each time they withdraw, six more grimlock ambushers return from patrolling the mountains and make up two more patrols in the tower.

Grimlock ambushers fight to the death.

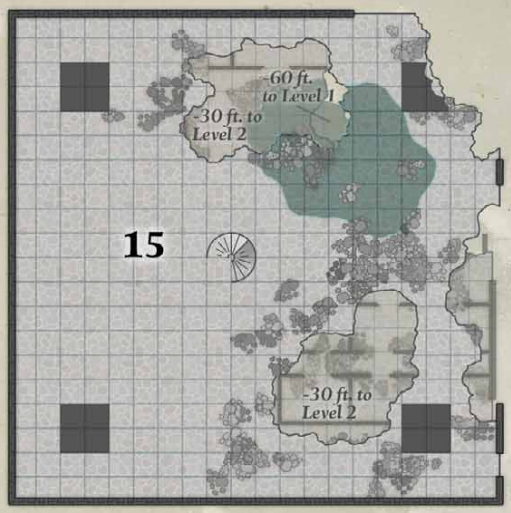
Forlorn Tower



Level 2

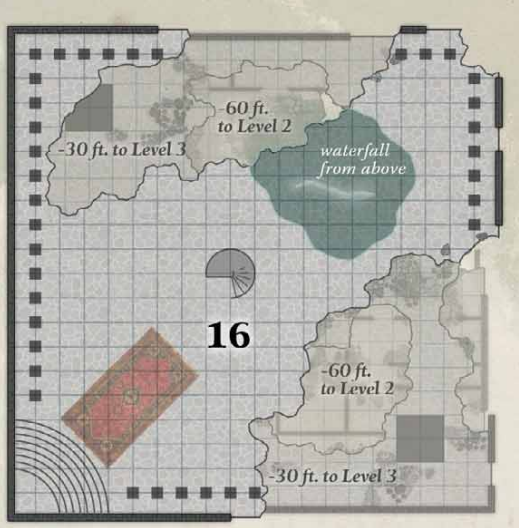


Level 3



= 5 ft.

Level 4



3 Grimlock Ambushers	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (blind)	XP 600 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; blindsight 10	
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55; see also *offensive shift*	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23	
Immune gaze	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+16 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 2d12 + 17).	
↯ **Offensive Shift** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves within 2 squares of the grimlock ambusher and attacks an ally of the grimlock; recharges when first bloodied)	
The grimlock ambusher shifts and makes a melee basic attack against the enemy.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +12	
Str 20 (+10)	**Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 14 (+7)	**Int** 9 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+4)
Equipment greataxe	

Tower Encounter Areas

The following encounter areas correspond to the map presented on page 85.

1. Eaters of the Dead

Following the trail, the adventurers come upon a wide road that climbs the final stretch to the tower. The old road twists through a series of passes and rises until it finally clears the tortured landscape as a wide shelf overlooking a great chasm.

When the PCs reach this point, read:

Perched on the edge of a ravine is a tall, crumbling tower. A sparkling waterfall spilling from hundreds of feet above strikes the tower, vanishing for a time before spewing out the spire's front and tumble down into the ravine beyond. Grimlock corpses and rubble lie scattered about a wide path that winds around to the opposite side of the tower.

Drawn by the smell of rotting meat, ghouls came to this area only to be warped by the *Tear of Ioun*. As soon as the PCs enter the area, they trigger the tactical encounter.

Encounter: 3. Eaters of the Dead, page 94.

2. Silent Watchers

The pathway winds around the tower toward the southwestern face and ends at a set of double doors.

When the PCs see the area, read:

The path climbs as it makes its way to a pair of great iron doors. Towering, weathered statues of black stone flank the approach, each resembling a sword-wielding humanoid wearing a cowl, with head bent low to conceal facial features. Each one's hands rest on its sword's pommel, with the point buried in the ground between the statue's feet. At one time eight statues stood here, four on a side, but only five remain intact.

Arcana (detect magic; DC 30): *The statues emit a faint magical aura, probably the remains of a powerful effect.*

Perception DC 20: *Each intact statue has an open mouth, and inside you see an odd-shaped depression.*

Religion DC 25: *In the old church, it was customary to place an Ioun stone inside the statue's mouth. According to legend, certain stones could cause the statues to animate and defend the temple.*

The statues depict ancient holy champions of Ioun. Although they once had power, they no longer do.

3. Black Depths Foulspawn

To the west, the ground rises to a wall of stone that extends up to the shelf above. A dark wound, about 5 feet wide, leads into the mountainside. Hearing the fell call of the *Tear of Ioun*, a foulspawn seer led a band of foulspawn to Forlorn Tower to join the Stormcrows and eventually claim the artifact. Having fought grimlocks near the tower already, it plots within this cave.

Encounter: 4. Black Depths Foulspawn, page 95.

4. Ancient Guardian

The heavy iron doors here are closed and so heavy that it takes a move action to open them. Characters opening the doors automatically alert the inhabitants of the room beyond. Garen, one of the Stormcrows, reactivated an inert golem here, so the creature is now loyal to the dwarf. Entering this chamber or encountering Garen in the hall outside this chamber triggers the encounter.

Encounter: 5. Ancient Guardian, page 97.

5. Spiral Staircase

These stairs wind up through the heart of the tower, climbing all the way to the top.

When the PCs enter this area, read:

Crumbling steps, slick with spray from the nearby waterfall, climb around a wide stone pillar, ascending through the ceiling. Bits of stone and masonry litter every surface, and tiny spiders with various deformities or strange glowing bodies crawl through the shadows.

The spiders are harmless.

6. Shattered Chambers

These rooms are now empty, but recently they housed dozens of grimlocks that the Stormcrows slew in their initial attack on the place. Exploring these rooms reveals some of this tower's secrets.

When the PCs come near these rooms, read:
Cracks cover the floor and walls, turning this corner of the tower into a crumbling mess. Metal bits in the rubble suggest furniture was once here. A battle occurred here in the recent past—bloodstains and marks from spells are obvious.

Centuries ago, this area housed Kaorti initiates. A search of the rooms (Perception DC 21) turns up a useful clue. Hidden beneath a large chunk of ceiling is an old silver icon of Ioun fitted with a starburst constructed of eight tiny amethysts surrounding a large sapphire. This pattern represents the Kaorti (Religion DC 25).

7. Hideous Nest

This entire section housed Kaorti initiates. Branching off from a common chamber and devotional room are apartments that once housed four acolytes comfortably. Now, foul aberrants lair here.

Encounter: 6. Hideous Nest, page 99.

8. Waterfall

Water from above has worn away parts of the tower.

When the PCs can see this area, read:
Rushing and roaring, water spills down from an upper floor, crashing to a pool formed where the floor of the tower once was. Rubble piles form small islands in the churning pool. The water runs out through a massive hole in the wall, which offers a breathtaking view of the mountains. Interior walls here are in various states of collapse.

Ceiling Holes: From this area, the PCs can spot part of the upper level's ceiling, about 60 feet above. The floor of the second level is about 30 feet above this area.

Pool: The water in the pool isn't deep, but it hides numerous pits and holes. It is difficult terrain.

Waterfall: The cascade is powerful, and creatures within 2 squares of it take –8 to Perception checks to listen. Creatures entering the space containing the waterfall, indicated by the light blue line on the map, are subject to an attack.

Waterfall

Opportunity Action **Melee**
Target: The creature that entered a waterfall square.
Attack: +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target falls prone and slides 3 squares toward the nearby ravine.
Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied before entering the waterfall and its move action ends immediately.
Special: If the target goes over the edge of the ravine (Athletics DC 25 to climb near the waterfall, DC 20 elsewhere), it falls 80 feet into a shallow stream.

If the PCs are here, they might see into area 9. The grimlocks there might not notice the characters, since the waterfall interferes with their blindsight. See below.

9. Denva's Stand

Denva, one of the Stormcrows, coordinates grimlock patrols here. One patrol takes rest here, the patrols alternating active cycles. As soon as the PCs come close to this area (shown on the tactical map), the encounter begins.

Encounter: 7. Denva's Stand, page 101.

10. Old Wyvern Roost

In the ravine stands a stony outcropping, where wyverns once roosted.

If the PCs come here, read:
This rocky plinth juts up from the ravine. A few gnawed old bones suggest that something lived here long ago. Nestled in a nearby crevice are large egg-shaped orbs with black, violet, and green shells.

Eggs: A character who succeeds on a DC 21 Nature check identifies the eggs as similar to those belonging to wyverns. However, they have weird colors. The *Tear* corrupted these eggs long ago, yet preserved them here. If disturbed, the eggs explode, screaming like living creatures for a moment and blasting foul slime.

Foul Eggs ✦ Acid Fear

Immediate Reaction **Close** blast 3, leading edge centered on the square with the number 10 in it.
Trigger: Disturbing the eggs.
Target: Each creature in blast.
Attack: +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 acid damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is not pushed.
Special: If the target goes over the edge of the ravine (Athletics DC 20 to climb), it falls 20 feet to the lower shelf.

11. Four Pillars

The stairs lead here.

When the PCs reach the second floor, read:

Coming up through the floor, you find yourself in a square chamber. Archways in the center of each wall open into wide corridors and more rooms. Standing in each corner, flanking each arch, is a thick square pillar that extends from floor to ceiling. To the north, though broken walls, water spills into this chamber from the falls.

Throughout the area, PCs find broken statuary, rubble, and other detritus.

12. Shattered Rooms

The northwest and northeast passages lead to the most unstable part of the tower. Destrachans keep watch here, and they attack any PCs who enter the area.

Encounter: 8. Farspeakers, page 103.

13. Chamber of Horrors

This area is largely empty since the rooms to the south were plundered years ago.

When the PCs approach, read:

This square chamber has three exits—two single doors and a set of double doors. The double doors are metal of some sort, perhaps bronze or gold, but a thick layer of grime hides the truth. A whiff of decay reaches you from the doors.

Perception DC 20: *Giggling comes from beyond the double doors, followed by a wet sound.*

The single wooden doors lead to dorms, while the double doors lead to the mess hall. The smaller rooms were all bedrooms, now holding only rubble, metal debris from furniture, and the odd bone. The larger room served as a dining hall, with an old kitchen and larder attached on the far side. Inside is one of the Stormcrows and a tactical encounter.

Encounter: 9. Chamber of Horrors, page 105.

14. Holding Chambers

The Stormcrows have succumbed to the corrupting effect of *Tear of Ioun*, and their devotion to the stone has magnified the tensions inside the group. When the *Tear* went missing, Elomir blamed Shantaira, the mercenary group's wizard. That she was his lover and confidant did nothing to change his mind, but it did spare her life. He imprisoned her in these chambers and set an eye of flame to guard her. The tactical encounter begins as soon as the PCs move into the area.

Encounter: 10. Holding Chambers, page 107.

15. Hall of Reflection

Before the Kaorti opened the portal to the Far Realm, this chamber served the priests as a place of meditation, introspection, and study. Shelves laden with books and scrolls filled the chamber. The catastrophe of the Kaorti's failure and the passage of time have buried the room's original function beneath debris.

Encounter: 11. Hall of Reflection, page 109.

16. Divine Conduit

The Divine Conduit served as the *Tear of Ioun's* cradle. Infused with the power of the corrupted relic, the room has palpable air of evil. The cause is the Kaorti effort to enter the Far Realm. When their great orrery failed, it exploded here.

With much of the ceiling and upper walls destroyed, and with the constant flow of water from above, this area is the least stable and most dangerous of them all. The PCs trigger the tactical encounter as soon as they enter.

Encounter: 12. Divine Conduit, page 111.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the characters defeat Elomir, the adventure is over—except for returning to Wellspring with any surviving Stormcrows. The rest of the aberrant creatures flee the tower and head back to the Underdark through the tunnel in area 3. Soon after, without the presence of the *Tear of Ioun* to keep it intact, the tower collapses.

Back in Wellspring, the PCs receive their rewards. Confident the PCs have found the source of the attack on Wellspring, Lord Criswell celebrates the PCs as heroes. The surviving Stormcrows, if any, act as you decide.

In all likelihood, however, the characters come away with more questions than answers. The *Tear of Ioun* is still missing. Further, the PCs might have an important lead in Cylus, who hired the Stormcrows. They also find that Deirdre has moved into the vacant temple of Ioun, assuming duties there for the time being.

This story continues in "Depths of Madness," the second chapter of the *Tear of Ioun* campaign arc. Look for it in *Dungeon* #162.

1. Grell Attack

Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Setup

1 grell philosopher (P)
3 horrid grells (H)

A grell philosopher tracked the *Tear*'s thief to the square, but the cunningly concealed door in the statue thwarts further pursuit. Place the grell philosopher and the horrid grells, while the players place their miniatures in the indicated setup area. A horrid grell still lurks on a side street gorging on the flesh of slain commoners. Don't place it until the PCs can see it.

When the PCs see the monsters, read:
Cries of horror erupt as three beaked brains trailing barbed tentacles come to hover above the square's occupants. A constable lunges at one, and the creature quickly pulls him off his feet, tearing him apart in a shower of gore. At that moment, the largest of the three speaks in a foul tongue.

Characters who speak Deep Speech hear:
"The Tear is near! Find it! Search wood and stone, blood and bone."

Grell Philosopher (P) **Level 11 Elite Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,200

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +12; blindsight 12
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
AC 27; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23
Immune gaze; **Resist** 20 lightning
Saving Throws +2
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover)
Action Points 1

Tentacle Rake (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Lightning Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning**
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Psychic Storm (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic, Zone**
Area burst 2 within 10; +14 vs. Will; 3d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). The psychic storm is a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any creature entering the zone is dazed (save ends).

Venomous Mind (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target must choose a random target for any melee attacks it makes (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +13, Stealth +20
Str 14 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 16 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+6)

Tactics

The grells automatically kill one pilgrim square per round. Once at least one adventurer comes within range of blindsight, the grell alerts its allies and engages the threat. Each horrid grell trains its attacks against a single creature, using *tentacle grab* to snatch an adventurer and then bite him to death. The grell philosopher targets pilgrims with its *lightning lance*, moving and blasting until it detects the PCs with its blindsight. When it does, it unleashes a *psychic storm* on the largest group of characters and spends its action point to unleash *venomous mind*. It continues to use *venomous mind* while it has melee attackers.

3 Horrid Grells (H) **Level 9 Elite Soldiers**
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 800 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +10; blindsight 12
HP 192; **Bloodied** 96
AC 26 (28 while the horrid grell has an enemy grabbed); **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19
Immune gaze
Saving Throws +2
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover)
Action Points 1

Tentacle Rake (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Tentacle Grab (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed. The grell can grab only one creature at a time.

Venomous Bite (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Grabbed target only; +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Stealth +18
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+3)

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light; this encounter takes place during the day.

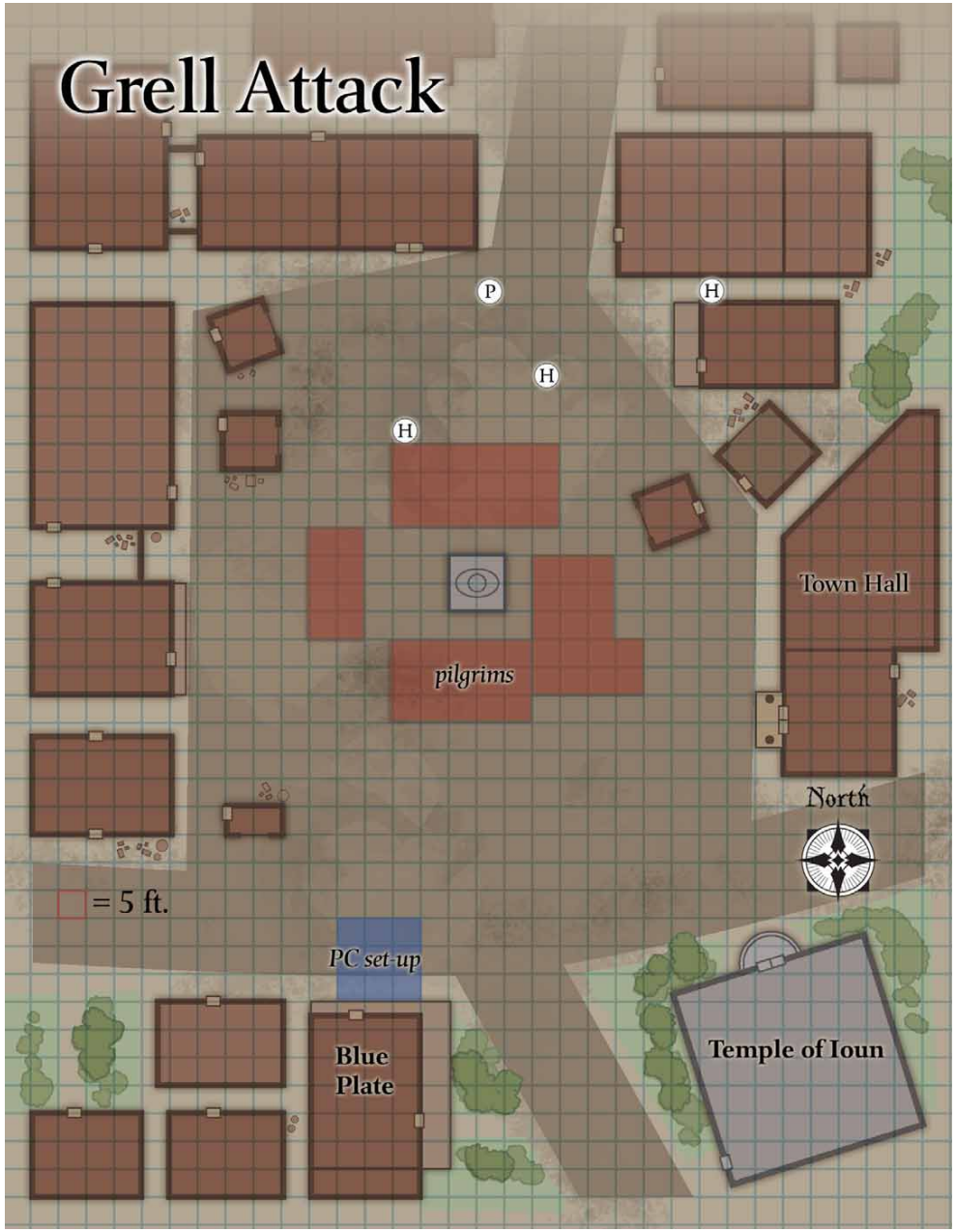
Buildings: One-story buildings stand about 3 squares tall, while two-story buildings stand twice as high. The temple of Ioun rises 6 squares above the battlefield. The wooden doors are all good quality and barred (Athletics DC 20), while the doors to the temple are strong and locked (Athletics DC 25; Thievery DC 20). Climbing the buildings requires DC 25 Athletics checks.

The building contains the sorts of items one might expect–furniture, displays, wares, cowering commoners, and so on.

Estered's Statue: The statue stands 4 squares tall (Athletics DC 25 to climb) and it acts as blocking terrain for determining cover. A secret door (Perception DC 31) at the base of the statue leads into Estered's secret lab. Unless the PCs actively look for it, they don't notice it. This area is detailed in the "Depths of Madness" adventure, coming in *Dungeon* #162.

Pilgrims: When the grells attack, pilgrims crowd the square where indicated on the map. The pilgrims are noncombatants and thus don't have statistics. Consider each space containing a pilgrim to have 1 hit point. Characters and creatures can enter and end their movement in spaces containing pilgrims, but such squares count as difficult terrain.

The pilgrims are pious, but they don't want to die. Starting on the second round, on initiative count 10, the pilgrims shift 1 square away from any attackers, then move 8 squares. They do this until they move off the map, at which point they escape the carnage. PCs in the way can allow the fleeing pilgrims by.



2. Eyes of Malachi

Encounter Level 11 (3,400 XP)

Setup

Eskade (T)
6 Eyes of Malachi (E)

Eskade leads her small force through the woods. She isn't certain who the PCs are but fears they share her goal. Her bloodthirstiness and madness inspire her to murder the PCs.

Have the players place their miniatures in the space indicated on the map. Enemies hidden behind trees have total cover, so don't place them until the PCs first take their turns.

When the PCs enter this area, read:
Dark water flows through debris and rocks choking the nearby streambed. Trees small and large reduce your visibility. Other than the flowing water, the woods are still and quiet.

Perception DC 24: *A humanoid figure crouches in the underbrush. It wears black hides and hefts two axes. Concealing its features is a black leather mask fitted with iron bars over the eyes and mouth. Set in the center of the mask is an ornament resembling a bloody eye.*

Use the above description to describe the fangs when they attack. Unless the PCs detected a hidden eye of Malachi, the enemies gain surprise.

When Eskade attacks, read:
A slender tiefling female dressed in leathers emerges from hiding, clutching a nasty morningstar. Her face is a mask of scar tissue. Madness and hate fill her yellow eyes, and a foreboding radiance roils about her as she stands.

Eskade (T) **Level 10 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 1,000
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 168; **Bloodied** 84
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 25; see also *shadow walk*
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; see *shadow walk*
Action Points 1

Morningstar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.

Malachi's Radiance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Radiant**
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 radiant damage, ongoing 5 radiant damage, and the target cannot move closer to Eskade (save ends both). Another target within 5 squares takes 1d6 + 5 radiant damage.

Bad Starsign (standard; encounter)
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Will; 4d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes -2 to attack rolls (save ends).

Starfire Veil (minor, while bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Fire**
Close burst 1; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 fire damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Star Curse (minor; at-will)
Eskade curses the nearest enemy that she can see. Her attacks deal a cursed enemy an extra 1d8 damage.

Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)
Eskade gains a +1 power bonus to her next attack roll against an enemy that hit her since her last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, it deals an extra 7 damage.

Shadow Walk
If Eskade moves at least 3 squares on her turn, she gains concealment until the end of her next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +14, Stealth +9
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 21 (+10)
Equipment leather armor, morningstar, rod

6 Eyes of Malachi (E) **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 400 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 95; **Bloodied** 47
AC 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Speed 6

Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.

Handaxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

Malachi's Fangs (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
The eye of Malachi makes a battleaxe attack and a handaxe attack. If both attacks hit, one target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).

Scream for Malachi (when reduced to 0 hp) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +13 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage.

Pain Slide (move; at will)
Creatures taking ongoing damage can't attack the eye of Malachi for moving or shifting.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Nature +9, Stealth +12
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+3)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)
Equipment hide armor, battleaxe, handaxe, mask

Tactics

The eyes of Malachi move or charge toward the closest characters, aiming to lock down strikers and defenders. Once an eye of Malachi engages a PC, it focuses its attacks, using both weapons against the same target until that target drops.

Eskade opens with *Malachi's radiance* against any character in range and that she can see. She then unleashes *bad starsign* on a striker or controller. The warlock keeps mobile to be able to curse multiple PCs and to employ *shadow walk*. When she is bloodied, she waits to use *starfire veil* until she can catch melee attackers trying to block her escape..

When four of the eyes of Malachi fall, Eskade flees if she is bloodied. If she isn't bloodied, she fights until

all the eyes of Malachi fall. The eyes of Malachi fight to the death.

Features of the Area

Illumination: During the day, dim light fills the forest.

Trees: Trees act as blocking terrain for determining cover.

Underbrush: Squares containing underbrush are difficult terrain. The underbrush lightly obscures its area and any sighting beyond it.

Stream: This waterway, 3 feet deep, is difficult terrain.

Treasure: Eskade and the Eyes of Malachi carry one parcel. This is likely to be a magic item Eskade owns and uses.

Development

If you plan on using the Harrowfolk, the PCs have a change to notice them after the second round of the fight. A character who makes a DC 21 Perception check sees the half-orcs observing in the distance.

Conclusion

Under the masks are human males with various deformities, some self-inflicted. Be creative with your descriptions.

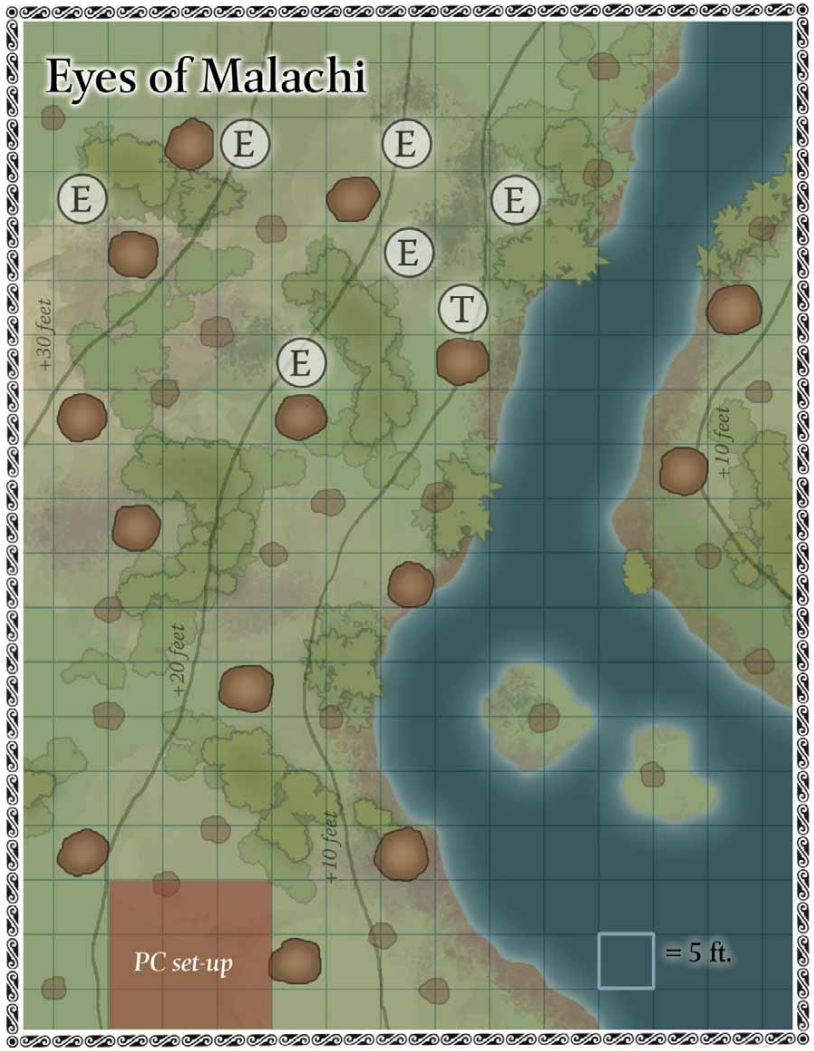
If any of the enemies in this encounter is captured, they can be forced (Intimidate DC equal to Will defense -2) to reveal information. Each piece requires another check. Diplomacy doesn't work, drawing only mocking laughter, but Bluff might. A failure causes the enemy to try to attack the PCs in a suicidal manner.

✦ *"We serve the mighty and terrible Malachi. He shall rain ruin on you and yours soon enough."*

✦ *"We attacked you because you were here—deemed by the stars to be our victims. We also suspected you shared our goal."*

✦ *"What we seek is the Tear of Ioun. Do you deny you also seek it?"*

✦ *"Who knows what Malachi hopes to do with the stone? Something beyond your puny mind, no doubt."*



3. Eaters of the Dead

Encounter Level 11 (3,100 XP)

Setup

5 warped ghouls (G)
4 warped zombies (Z)

If the PCs come slowly and quietly up the path (DC 14 Stealth check), they might spot the ghouls feasting on the dead. Otherwise, the ghouls hear the PCs' and hide in plain sight, like the zombies, pretending to be corpses (Insight DC 18 to see through the ruse). The zombies sense the PCs immediately when a character moves within 5 squares of the zombie.

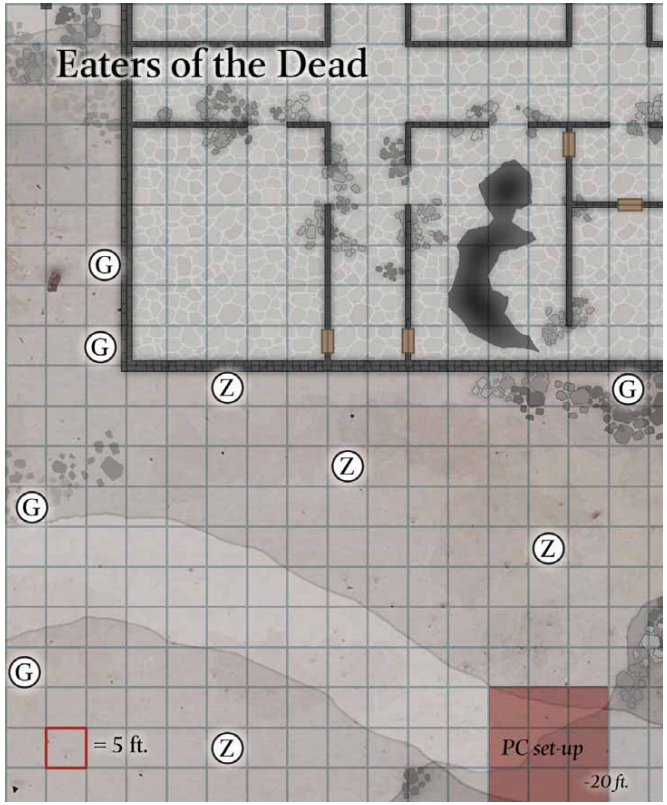
Have the players place their miniatures in the area shown on the map. Don't place the monsters until the PCs notice them or the creatures attack. If the PCs fail to notice the monsters, the undead receive a surprise round. If the PCs spot the undead before the monsters notice the PCs, the PCs receive a surprise round.

When the PCs see a ghoul in action, read:
An emaciated humanoid springs from the ground to attack. Bloody saliva spills from its fanged mouth, and a second toothy maw opens like a sore in its belly. Pinpoints of violet light burn in its sunken eye sockets.

When the PCs see a zombie act, read:
Ropy guts emerge from a gnawed grimlock corpse, helping the creature to stand. With arms held like dead weights, it lumbers forward, entrails whipping like tentacles.

5 Warped Ghouls (G) **Level 10 Brute**
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead) XP 500 each
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 130; **Bloodied** 65
AC 22; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic
Speed 8, climb 4
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage.
✝ **Gut Maw** (standard; at-will)
Provokes opportunity attacks unless the target is immobilized; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the ghoul regains 10 hp.
✝ **Passing Consumption** (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack made by an adjacent attacker; recharges when first bloodied)
The ghoul can make a *gut maw* attack that doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 20 (+10) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+8)

4 Warped Grimlock Zombies (Z) **Level 11 Minion**
Medium aberrant animate (blind, undead) XP 150
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +7; blindsight 5
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22
Immune disease, gaze, poison
Speed 6
⊕ **Viscera Grab** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape ends). The zombie can grab only one target at a time, but the zombie can maintain the grab as long as it remains within 2 squares of the target.
Burrowing Entrails (standard; grabbed target only; at-will)
+14 vs. Fortitude; 10 necrotic damage.
Corpse Seeming
If the zombie is inactive, it appears to be a corpse (DC 18 Insight to see through the ruse).
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 3 (+1) **Cha** 3 (+1)



Tactics

The undead attack en masse. Zombies don't coordinate with the ghouls, but the ghouls use the zombies as incidental flanking partners. They stay close to take advantage when the zombies grab and thereby immobilize a PC. The ghouls flee if three or more of them are slain.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Depends on time of day.
Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

4. Black Depths Foulspawn

Encounter Level 11 (3,150 XP)

Setup

1 foulspawn seer (S)
2 foulspawn berserkers (B)
3 foulspawn manglers (M)
1 foulspawn hulk (H)

Hiding foulspawn manglers watch the area. They have already spotted the PCs and warned their comrades. The foulspawn seer has decided to wait and watch, and perhaps to ambush the PCs as they emerge from the tower later. Don't place any of the monsters until the PCs see them. If the PCs approach the cave, the manglers wait until they are spotted or the PCs climb to about 15 feet. Then the attack begins.

When the PCs enter the tactical map's area, read:
A cave mouth leads into the side of the mountain. Faint light flickers beyond the opening.

Perception DC 24: *A creature peeks over a pile of rubble, the blue skin on its bald head seemingly composed of fibers and its wide mouth full of fangs.*

When the PCs fully see a foulspawn mangler, read:
The humanoid is gaunt with spindly limbs. Its arms divide into two forearms at the elbow. Each ends in a hand bearing a bone knife.

When the foulspawn hulk acts, read:
A hulking giant launches from the cave, its body skinless and oozing, sinew and muscle exposed. It skids down the slope, raising dust and rocks, howling with alien glee.

Foulspawn Seer (S) **Level 11 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium aberrant humanoid XP 600

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
Foul Insight aura 10; allies in the aura that can hear the foulspawn seer gain a +2 power bonus to one attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw on their turn.
AC 24; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21
HP 86; **Bloodied** 43
Speed 6, teleport 3
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Twisted Staff** **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.
(standard; at-will) **Warp Orb**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
(standard; daily) **Distortion Blast**
Close blast 5; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Aberrant creatures take half damage.
Bend Space (immediate interrupt, when the foulspawn seer would be hit by an attack; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**
The foulspawn seer teleports 3 squares.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10
Str 10 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 22 (+11) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Equipment staff

When a foulspawn berserker acts, read:
A howling humanoid with mottled skin—like pale, bruised flesh—leaps from the cave with an inhuman cry. It is hairless, and its wide maw is full of fangs. It carries a greatsword in its broad hands.

When a foulspawn seer acts, read:
An obese figure, its flesh rippling as if it were water being hit by rain, shuffles to the cave entrance. Its garb is weird, robelike skin, and it bears a staff made of humanoid bones. The eyes of the skull atop the staff glow, and sinister whispers issue from its gaping mouth.

2 Foulspawn Berserkers (B) **Level 9 Soldier**
Medium aberrant humanoid XP 400 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision
Berserker Aura aura 1; when a creature in the aura makes a melee attack, it targets a random creature within its reach.
HP 102; **Bloodied** 51
AC 25; **Fortitude** 26 (28 while bloodied), **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21
Immune fear
Speed 7
(standard; at-will) ✦ **Greatsword** **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC (+16 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage, or 1d10 + 6 damage while bloodied.
Berserker Charge (standard; at-will)
The foulspawn berserker charges and deals an extra 5 damage when its melee basic attack hits.
Mental Feedback ✦ **Psychic**
If the foulspawn berserker is attacked by a charm effect, the foulspawn berserker and its attacker take 10 psychic damage.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 3 (+0)
Con 22 (+10) **Int** 8 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+5)
Equipment greatsword

Foulspawn Hulk (H) **Level 12 Brute**
Large aberrant humanoid XP 700

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 150; **Bloodied** 75
AC 24; **Fortitude** 27 (29 while bloodied), **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22
Immune fear
Speed 8
(standard; at-will) **Slam**
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 2d8 + 7 damage, or 3d8 + 9 damage while bloodied.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10
Str 24 (+13) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 7 (+4)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 7 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+8)

When the PCs see the cave interior, read:
The cave mouth opens onto long, narrow chamber. Gnawed grimlock body parts are scattered on the floor. A chest made of some type of carapace sits on the floor.

3 Foulspawn Manglers (M)	Level 8 Skirmisher
Medium aberrant humanoid	XP 350 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision	
HP 86; **Bloodied** 43; see also *dagger dance*	
AC 22 (24 while bloodied); **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20 (22 while bloodied), **Will** 19; see also *mangler's mobility*	
Speed 7 (9 while bloodied)	
⊕ **Bone Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
⸸ **Dagger Dance** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Weapon**	
The foulspawn mangler makes four bone dagger attacks and shifts 1 square after each attack.	
⚚ **Bone Daggers** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
The foulspawn mangler makes two bone dagger attacks. Ranged 5/10; +13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage with each hit.	
Combat Advantage	
The foulspawn mangler deals an extra 2d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Mangler's Mobility	
The foulspawn mangler gains a +5 racial bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by movement.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 10	
Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +12	
Str 13 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 6 (+2)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)	
Equipment 8 daggers	

Tactics

The foulspawn berserkers and hulk initially leap from the cave toward climbing PCs. Each can attempt a DC 20 Athletics checks to slow its fall. Regardless, each one takes aim at a climbing PC, if any. If it can, it bull rushes the climbing PC, pushing that PC out into open air for a fall. The rushing foulspawn doesn't follow, instead sliding to the ground at the base of the cliff. If it succeeded on its Athletics check, it takes half damage from the 30-foot fall (normally 3d10 damage).

Once on the ground, the berserkers and hulk each engage in melee. The berserkers initially move so they can charge, even at the risk of provoking opportunity attacks. More ponderous at first, the hulk moves to hit those who deal it the most damage after it becomes bloodied. Each monster is willing to take only one successful opportunity attack to move this way.

The manglers maneuver to slip among the PCs, using *dagger dance* to gain flanking positions. It then stays in melee, provoking opportunity attacks to continue flanking and maintain combat advantage. A mangler resorts to ranged attacks only if it cannot move into melee on its turn.

The foulspawn seer waits for its minions to engage the PCs. On its first turn, it hurls a *warp orb* at a PC within range (probably someone climbing or at the cliff base). The next turn, it teleports toward the ground, then does so again to land at the base of the cliff. It lands well way from PCs and the other foulspawn engaged in melee, but close enough to put most of its servants in its aura. It spends all its time launching *warp orbs* until it can catch several of the PCs in a *distortion blast*. It uses its other power only when threatened in melee.

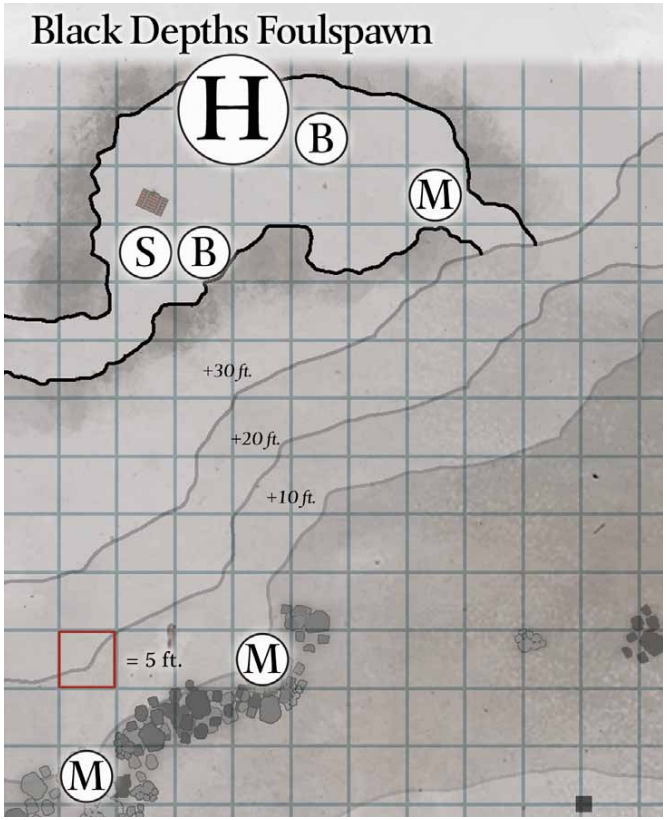
Features of the Area

Illumination: It is dark inside the cave. Outside, light depends on the time of day.

Ceiling: The cave is 15-feet high.

Cliff: The wall outside the cave is steep (Athletics DC 15 to climb) and elevated as shown on the map.

Underdark Tunnel: The western tunnel descends several miles beneath the mountains, leading into the Underdark. These deep tunnels hold the thriving foulspawn community of Black Depths, which is beyond the scope of this adventure. You can detail it if you wish.



Treasure: The foulspawn seer brought gifts to bribe the Stormcrows. It has two parcels, one of monetary value and one magic item. If the seer or one of its followers doesn't use the magic item, all the treasure is piled in the crate indicated on the map. Monetary treasure is likely to be gems and twisted art objects.

5. Ancient Guardian

Encounter Level 11 (3,100 XP)

Setup

Garen (G)
1 flesh golem (F)
1 stirge swarm (S)

Any creature that enters this chamber draws the golem's attention, though it doesn't attack unless it is attacked. If, however, Garen comes under attack, the golem engages his attackers. Garen attacks the PCs as soon as the stirges start to harass the party.

Place the flesh golem where indicated. Don't place the stirge swarm until the PCs detect them or until the swarm attacks. Garen's placement depends on the direction from which the PCs come into the room. The dwarf stands where shown if the PCs enter the area from outside, otherwise, he's hiding (Perception DC 25 to spot) farther down the tunnel.

When the PCs see the room, read:
An acrid smell assaults you, and you see a blackened filth coating every surface. Two platforms lay on either side of this room, and opposite from you is another pair of iron doors. A hulking humanoid sits on the northwestern platform, also covered in the foul black substance.

Nature DC 19: *The foul substance is guano, such as from bats or stirges, indicating a swarm of the creatures—probably nesting on the ceiling.*

Perception DC 21: *Faint squeaking sounds from above, where you see a squirming mass of ruddy winged bodies clinging to the ceiling. It's a swarm of stirges.*

Garen (G) **Level 10 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant humanoid, dwarf XP 1,000
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 208; **Bloodied** 104
AC 28; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2, +5 against poison
Speed 5
Action Points 1

Kukri (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage; reroll any result of 1 on a damage die.

Twin Stars (standard; requires two shuriken; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Two attacks; ranged 6/12; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.

Bleeding Slash (standard; requires kukri; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). Reroll any result of 1 on a damage die.

Tentacle Eye Feint (minor; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Fear**
Reach 2; +13 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square and grants Garen combat advantage until the end of his next turn.

Combat Advantage
Garen deals an extra 2d8 damage to a target he has combat advantage against.

Stand Your Ground
When Garen is subject to forced movement, he moves 1 square fewer than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock Garen prone, he can roll a saving throw to avoid falling prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven
Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Stealth +15, Thievery +15
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Equipment leather armor, kukri, 12 shuriken, thieves' tools

When the PCs enter the room, read:
Cracks appear in the substance covering the seated giant. Without standing, it turns its head and trains its now luminous eyes upon you. Suddenly, small, ruddy winged shapes fill the air from above—a cloud of stirges!

Flesh Golem (F) **Level 12 Elite Brute**
Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,400
Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 304; **Bloodied** 152; see also *berserk attack*
AC 26; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; can't shift
Action Points 1

Slam (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC (+18 while bloodied); 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
The flesh golem makes two slam attacks.

Berserk Attack (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack while bloodied; at-will)
The flesh golem makes a slam attack against a random target within its reach.

Golem Rampage (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚃)
The flesh golem moves up to its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 20 (+11) **Dex** 7 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+2)

When the PCs see Garen, read:
A male dwarf dressed in stained leather and armed with a short, curved blade barks a laugh when he sees you. His eyes emerge from the sockets on long, warty stalks, and a string of thick blue drool spills from his drooping mouth.

When the golem attacks, read:
The giant leaps to its feet, the foulness cracking and falling away to reveal flaking green skin underneath.

Stirge Swarm (S)	**Level 12 Brute**
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 700
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision	
Swarm Attack aura 1; the stirge swarm makes a melee basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.	
HP 141; **Bloodied** 70	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23	
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against close and area attacks	
Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)	
⊕ **Bloodsucking Swarm** (standard; at-will)	
+15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Skills Stealth +14	
Str 8 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+6)	
Con 11 (+6) **Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 4 (+3)	

Tactics

As soon as all the PCs enter the room or attack, the stirge swarm drops from the ceiling, gaining surprise if the PCs haven't spotted it. The swarm moves into and adjacent to as many PC spaces as it can. It doesn't consider the flesh golem and Garen to be enemies—the golem is not alive, and Garen's corruption protects him.

Garen rushes in to attack when he hears any commotion in this room, cackling madly and muttering oaths about cutting and stabbing. The dwarf uses the swarm and the construct for flanking, employing *bleeding slash* most often. When he can't flank or otherwise gain combat advantage, he uses *tentacle eye feint* to keep his victim off guard. He makes *twin stars* only when he can't engage a PC in melee.

The flesh golem doesn't stir from its seat until it or Garen is touched or attacked. It uses *golem rampage* immediately, smashing the PCs and the stirges. It avoids harming Garen, and it slams away while waiting to rampage again. It follows Garen's orders, providing flanking for its master.

The golem fights until slain, and the swarm until it disburses at 0 hp. While bloodied, Garen can be scared into surrendering (Intimidate DC 23). If he surrenders, he can make the golem stop attacking.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The chamber between the two double doors is dark unless the doors are open. In that case, there is dim light during the day.

Guano: The floor is covered with stirge droppings. Each square is treated as difficult terrain, unless the moving creature succeeds on a DC 10 Acrobatics check when starting to move.

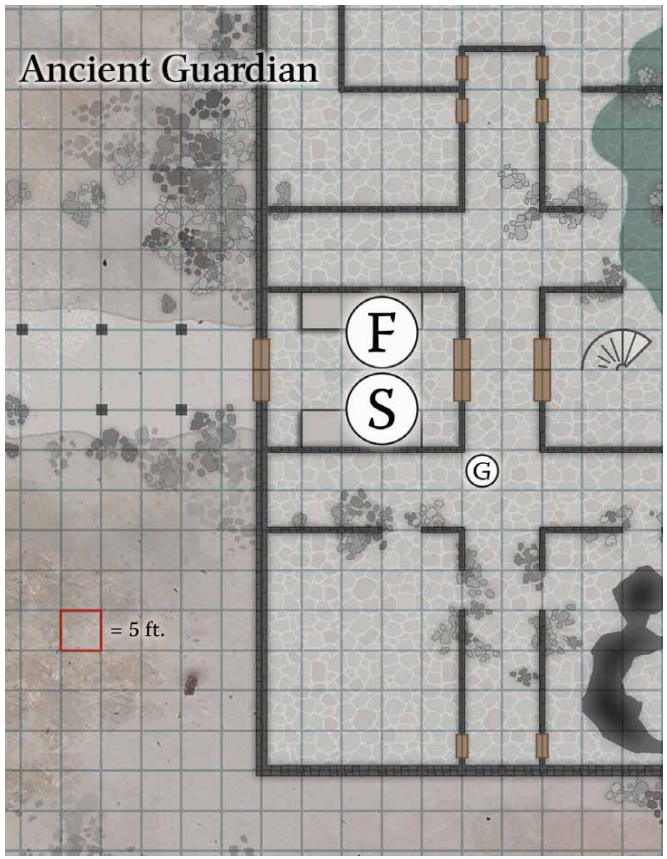
Platform: A shelf rises 4 feet from the floor on either side of the room. It costs 2 squares to move onto the platform (not including the guano). Large or larger creatures can enter spaces containing the shelf at no extra cost and do not have to squeeze.

Treasure: Garen has one parcel, which is likely to be a magic item.

Conclusion

The adventurers might take Garen alive, and if so, they can behold firsthand the extent of his corruption. He gibbers and moans, spitting terrible curses and giggling at his injuries while poking them. His skin twists and writhes in accordance with impossible muscles underneath.

Garen's madness prevents him from giving much useful information, but a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check or DC 18 Intimidate check causes to start shouting, "*The* Tear! *The* Tear! *It tests us! We must find it!*" Garen reveals only that the relic



hides "*above, always above.*" He is unable to provide any other assistance.

If restrained, Garen doesn't bother to struggle. He's wherever the PCs leave him when they return.

6. Hideous Nest

Encounter Level 10 (2,800 XP)

Setup

1 ravening cyst (R)
1 warped grick alpha (A)
3 warped gricks (G)

Using the tactical map for line of sight reference, place only those creatures the PCs see when they trigger the encounter, using starting positions as shown on the map. Reveal other creatures when they come into view.

When the PCs enter this area, read:
A wide cleft rips through this area's floor. All around it, the rooms have fallen into ruin, though signs of its former purpose are everywhere. Debris here includes metal pieces of ancient furniture, such as handles and knobs. Here and there, the walls glisten with slime.

Perception DC 17: *Glistening flesh clings to the chasm wall. Eyes and mouths open all over the lump as it lurches into motion. The mouths start to screech and babble.*

When the PCs see a grick, read:
This creature is like a blue worm or snake, but it has a beaked maw nestled between four writhing tentacles as a head.

Ravening Cyst (R) **Level 10 Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant beast XP 500

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +4; all-around vision, darkvision
HP 106; **Bloodied** 53
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Speed 6, climb 4 (spider climb)

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

⸸ **Burrowing Teeth** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; targets an enemy taking ongoing damage; +14 vs. Will; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the ravine cyst makes a secondary attack. *Secondary Attack:* Close burst 3, centered on the original target; targets enemies; +13 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

⇜ **Digestive Doom** (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Close burst 5; targets enemies taking ongoing damage; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 5 acid damage, ongoing 5 acid damage, and the target is dazed (save ends both).

Pain Slick
The ravening cyst doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it moves away from a target taking ongoing damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 14 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 18 (+9)

Tactics

The monsters rush to slay fresh prey. The gricks coordinate with the grick alpha, focusing on flanking individual targets. Meanwhile, the ravening cyst moves about, taking advantage of *pain slick* and consuming its foes. It climbs when necessary to attain a better position.

Warped Grick Alpha (A) **Level 11 Brute (Leader)**
Large aberrant beast XP 600

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 116; **Bloodied** 58
AC 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22
Resist 5 against effects that target AC
Speed 7, climb 4

⊕ **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is grabbed.

⸸ **Vicious Bite** (standard; at-will)
Grabbed target only; automatic hit; 1d8 + 5 damage.

Expert Flanker
The warped grick alpha gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against an enemy it is flanking.

Pinning Grip
The warped grick alpha's allies gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against an enemy grabbed by this creature.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +10
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 7 (+2)

3 Warped Gricks (G) **Level 10 Brute**
Medium aberrant beast XP 500 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15
Resist 5 against effects that target AC
Speed 6, climb 4

⊕ **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Expert Flanker
The grick gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against an enemy it is flanking.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +9
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

Features of the Area

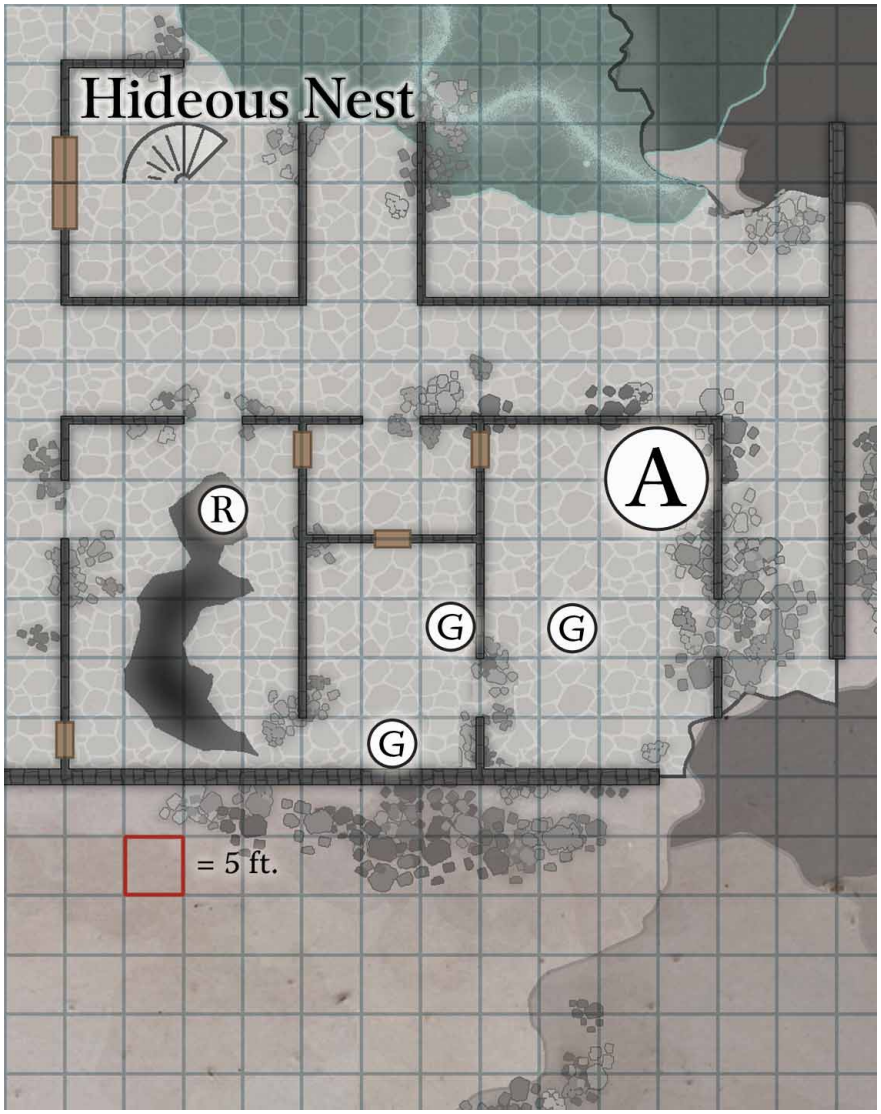
Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Chasm: This slick hole (Athletics DC 20 to climb) drops to a tight cleft 30 feet down. It has a small opening at the bottom that creatures like those in this room can squeeze through.

Wall Gap: In the area's eastern corner, the wall opens to the ravine near the tower. Squares adjacent to the hole collapse under any weight. This is the equivalent of the weakened floor hazard described in Tower Features, except a creature that triggers the hazard falls 60 feet into the ravine (Athletics DC 20 to climb).

Waterfall: The nearby waterfall might come into play in this area. See area 8 or encounter 12.

Treasure: One parcel is among the rubble here, likely to be an art object, gems, and/or money.



7. Denva's Stand

Encounter Level 13 (4,400 XP)

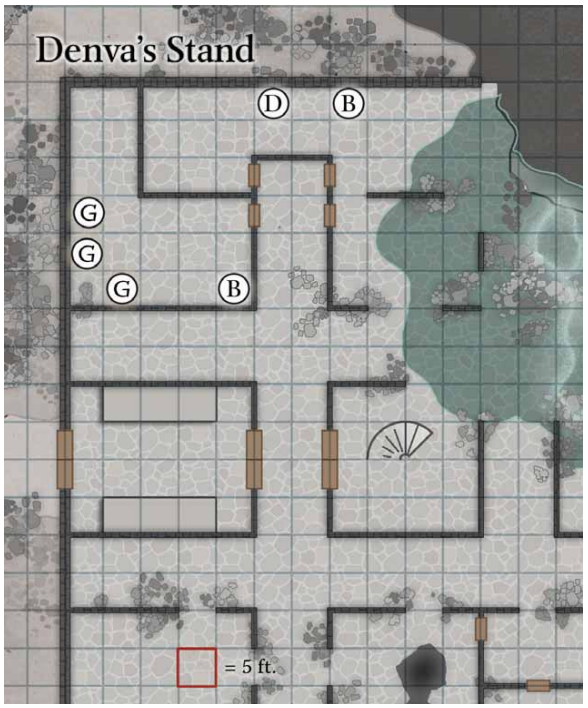
Setup

Denva (D)
3 grimlock ambushers (G)
2 grimlock berserkers (B)

The waterfall prevents Denva and her forces from sensing the PCs until the characters come close to the area or make a loud noise. All the grimlocks in the closed chamber are asleep.

If the PCs enter the closed chamber without alerting the grimlock berserker guarding Denva, they might be able to sneak up on the sleeping grimlocks (Stealth DC 13).

If Denva is somehow alerted to intruders before the PCs come here, the grimlocks are all awake and alert. Otherwise, the grimlock berserker guarding Denva can sense PCs within 5 squares (Stealth DC 18, 13 through a door).



Denva (D) **Level 10 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium aberrant humanoid, human XP 1,000
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 206; **Bloodied** 103
AC 28; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5
Action Points 1
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.
⸸ **Whirling Slashes** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Denva makes two longsword attacks. Each one that hits also slides the target 2 squares.
⸸ **Crushing Vice** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and one ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against it as a free action, adding +4 to the damage roll.
⸸ **Aberrant Howl** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and Denva and one ally within 5 squares regain 15 hit points. This power can bring a creature reduced to 0 hp back to life.
Knight's Move (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; one ally takes a move action as a free action.
Slimy Skin (move; at-will)
If Denva is adjacent to an enemy, she shifts to any other square adjacent to that enemy. She can also use this power with the escape action, gaining +2 to the check to escape. If she escapes, she can shift 1 square.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics +15, Insight +9, Intimidate +14
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 17 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

An encounter with Denva does not necessarily need to end in violence. If the PCs approach peacefully, she calls her sleeping grimlocks but holds them back to gain a sense of the adventurers' purpose. See Negotiating with Denva.

Place each enemy only when the PCs detect it.

When the PCs see the awake berserker, read:
A massive grimlock stands here, an axe befitting the creature's size in hand.

When the PCs see Denva, read:
This female, obviously the grimlocks' commander, is dressed as one would expect for a sword-wielding knight. Her eyes are wide as if she is horrified. Clear slime oozes from her skin, glistening on her plate armor and shield.

If grimlocks are asleep when the battle starts, they awaken during the first round and act on the second. The grimlocks howl and snarl as they attack.

3 Grimlock Ambushers (G) **Level 11 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (blind) XP 600 each
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; blindsight 10
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55; see also *offensive shift*
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23
Immune gaze
Speed 6
⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 2d12 + 17).
⸸ **Offensive Shift** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves within 2 squares of the grimlock ambusher and attacks an ally of the grimlock; recharges when first bloodied)
The grimlock ambusher shifts and makes a melee basic attack against the enemy.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +12
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 9 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+4)
Equipment greataxe

2 Grimlock Berserkers (B)	Level 13 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (blind)	XP 800 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; blindsight 10
HP 156; **Bloodied** 78
AC 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Immune gaze
Speed 6

Greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 18).

Power Attack (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires greataxe; +14 vs. AC; 1d12 + 12 damage (crit 2d12 + 24).

Frenzied Attack (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
The grimlock berserker makes two greataxe attacks against a bloodied enemy.

Grimlock Rage
When the grimlock berserker bloodies an enemy, it gains 10 temporary hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics +17, Endurance +14

Str 22 (+12)	**Dex** 12 (+7)	**Wis** 15 (+8)
Con 16 (+9)	**Int** 7 (+4)	**Cha** 9 (+5)

Equipment greataxe

Tactics

The grimlocks charge headlong into melee. They use their abilities to pin the PCs down and kill the characters one by one. If the PCs allow them to do so, the resting grimlocks hem the party in from behind when they emerge to do battle.

Denva supports the attack by using *whirling slashes* to rearrange the PCs to the benefit of her forces. Employing that ability and her *slimy skin*, she remains mobile and to sets up her *crushing vice* attack. If she finds herself without an ally adjacent to a target she wishes to attack with *crushing vice*, she utters a *knight's move* command to bring a grimlock in to help her. The grimlock that responds is willing to take one opportunity attack to aid Denva, but she prefers an ally that can move or shift without provoking. She favors using *crushing vice* with the grimlock berserkers as her partners.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The closed room is dark, but dim light pervades if the door is opened during the day.

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Pool: Water and the rough bottom of the pool combine to form difficult terrain.

Treasure: Denva has one parcel, which is likely to be a magic item.

Negotiating with Denva

The characters can negotiate with Denva by succeeding on a skill challenge.

Negotiating with Denva	Level 10
Skill Challenge	XP 1,000

The slime-covered female eyes you, sizing you up. She says, "I am Denva of the Stormcrows. Who are you? Why have you come here?" Ooze pours from her mouth while she waits for your response.

The party converses with Denva. Assume that the skill challenge takes about 5 minutes to complete.

Complexity
2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate

Other Skills
Dungeoneering, Insight

Victory
Denva begs the PCs to help her reach Wellspring and find help so that she can be cured. She reveals that a human named Cylus hired her and her companions to search for the *Tear of Ioun*. The relic transformed the Stormcrows, but then mysterious shadow creatures stole it. Elomir, the Stormcrow leader, sent the grells to Wellspring. He won't stop searching until the stone is recovered.
Denva can tell the PCs where to find Elomir, and she can warn them about other dangers in the tower you wish to reveal. She's too afraid of further corruption to risk delving into the tower with the PCs. Moments after Denva opens up, however, her grimlocks decide she has said too much. They snarl and attack the PCs. Denva is wracked with a sudden seizure during the fight, helpless. The PCs must protect her against intermittent coup de grace attempts by the grimlocks if they want her to survive.

Defeat
Denva commands the grimlocks to attack.

Bluff DC 19 (1 success, special maximum)
You use a false pretense for why you and your fellows are in the tower. A failed check closes off Bluff for the duration of the challenge—Denva scorns the liar. The failure also increases the DCs of other checks by 2 for the duration of the challenge.

Diplomacy DC 17 (1 success, no maximum)
You explain the true purpose of why you are here, or you appeal to Denva's former humanity.

Dungeoneering DC 17 (0 success, 0 failures)
You see that Denva has aberrant traits—she's undergoing a transformation. Success opens subsequent Insight checks.

History DC 19 (1 success, no maximum)
You recount the deeds of the Stormcrows, reminding Denva of her life before her corruption.

Insight Requires successful Dungeoneering check; DC 19 (1 success, 1 maximum)
You sense that Denva is resisting her transformation, causing a mix of emotions—not the least of which is the horror in her eyes. Revealing this information grants +2 on further Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Intimidate DC 24 (1 success, no maximum)
You threaten Denva, guaranteeing her harm unless she helps you. A failure causes Denva to scoff that she has seen greater horrors than the PCs, and it closes off this approach. It also increases the DCs of other checks by 2 for the duration of the challenge.

Conclusion

If the PCs take Denva alive after successfully negotiating with her, she willingly stays behind without being restrained. She also cooperates with the PCs, guarding other Stormcrows the PCs leave alive.

If the PCs knock her out in a fight, she doesn't struggle against her restraints when she awakens. If left unrestrained, however, she hunts the PCs down later in the adventure, or she escapes the tower on her own—your choice. What happens to her after that is also your call.

8. Farspeakers

Encounter Level 11 (3,200 XP)

Setup

2 destrachan farspeakers (D)
2 weakened floor traps (marked on map)

This place is dangerous in part because of the rushing water and the pair of destrachans that lair here. The destrachans are largely out of sight when the characters enter, so don't place them immediately. The PCs who enter this area must succeed on DC 16 Stealth checks to avoid the creatures' notice.

2 Destrachan Farspeakers (D)	Level 11 Controller
Large aberrant magical beast (blind)	XP 600
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +10; blindsight 10	
HP 117; **Bloodied** 58	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	
Immune gaze	
Resist 10 thunder	
Speed 6, climb 4	
Claw (standard; at-will)	
+16 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.	
Sound Pulse (standard; at-will) ✦ **Thunder**	
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 thunder damage.	
Buffeting Bellow (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Thunder**	
Close blast 5; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.	
Drowsing Thrum (standard; encounter) ✦ **Thunder**	
Close burst 2; +14 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target falls unconscious (save ends).	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech	
Skills Bluff +9, Stealth +14	
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+5)	
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+8)	

When the PCs enter this area, read:

The tower crumbles beneath the force of the waterfall. It washes away the ceiling and floors one stone at a time, sending them tumbling down into the ravine.

Perception DC 24: *A hideous creature like a bipedal dinosaur stands here, its large, strange ears flicking back and forth, sensitive for sounds. Its eyeless head lifts in your direction, revealing a tubular, fang-lined mouth.*

2 Weakened Floors	Level 10 Elite Lurker
Hazard	XP 1,000 each
A groan is your only warning before you drop through the floor to whatever lays below.	
Hazard: A section of floor, usually 5 contiguous squares, is weak. It gives out under any significant weight, collapsing into a room below.	
Perception	
✦ DC 18: The character notices the weak spot in the floor.	
Dungeoneering	
✦ Requires a successful Perception check; DC 15: The character knows the floor can't hold weight.	
Trigger	
The hazard attacks when a creature enters a hazard square.	
Attack	
Opportunity Action **Melee**	
Target: The creature that triggered the hazard.	
Attack: +13 vs. Reflex	
Hit: Target falls to the level below, takes 4d10 damage, and is knocked prone.	
Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.	
Effect: The floor falls away, leaving an obvious open hole to the floor below. The hazard is no longer hidden.	
Countermeasures	
✦ Athletics or Thievery DC 18: Standard action. An adjacent character pushes the weakened floor down to the level below, triggering only the Effect section above.	
✦ Athletics DC 10 (20 without a running start): Part of a move action. The character can jump over the affected square.	

Waterfall

The waterfall is likely to come into play here. Creatures within 2 squares of it take –8 to Perception checks to listen. Those entering the space containing the waterfall, indicated by the light blue line on the map, are subject to an attack.

Waterfall	
Opportunity Action **Melee**	
Target: The creature that entered a waterfall square.	
Attack: +14 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls prone and slides 3 squares toward the nearby ravine.	
Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied before entering the waterfall and its move action ends immediately.	
Special: If the target goes over the edge of the ravine (Athletics DC 25 to climb near the waterfall, DC 20 elsewhere), it falls 80 feet into a shallow stream.	

Tactics

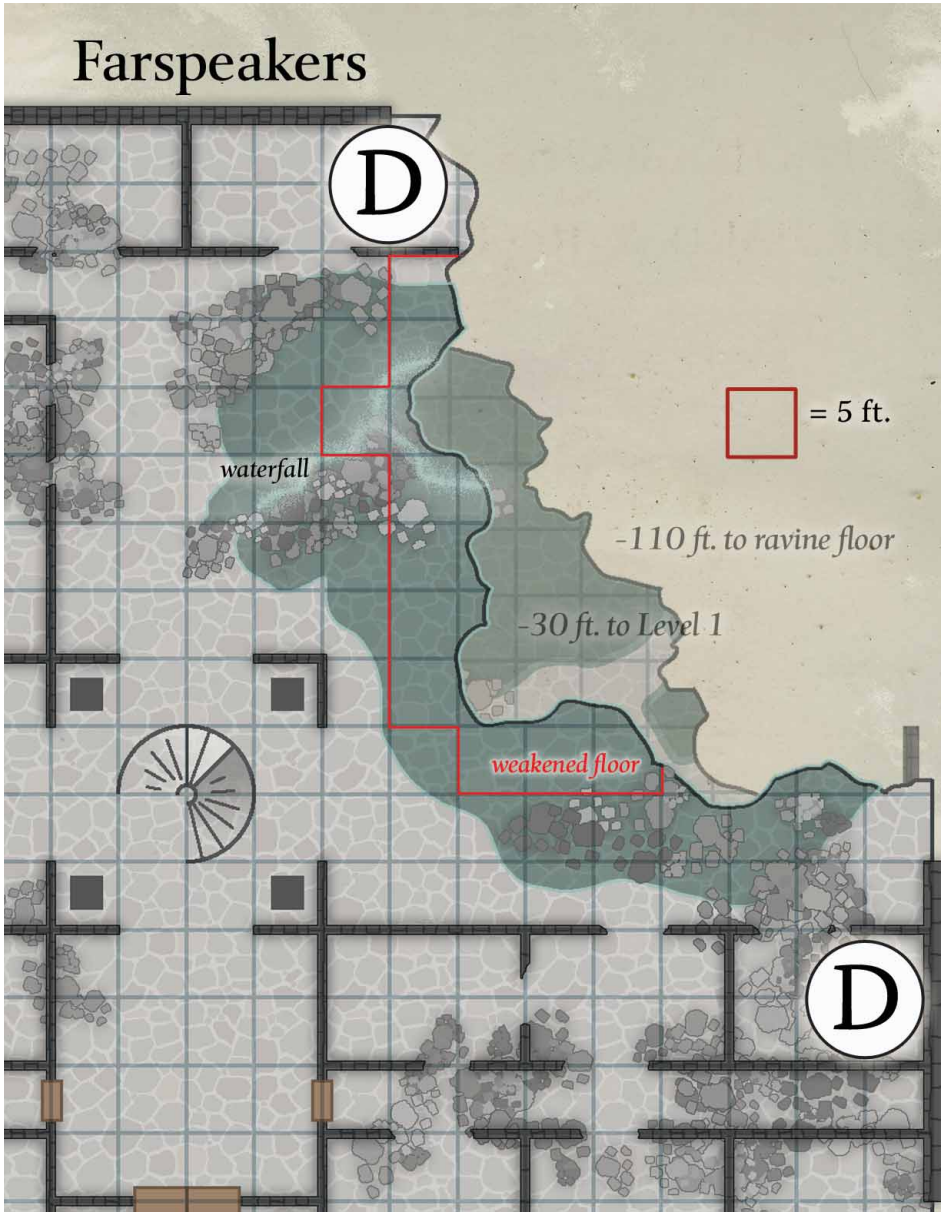
The farspeakers emerge, each opening with a *buffeting bellow*. Each one prefers to use *sound pulse* while *buffeting bellow* recharges, but it resorts to claws rather than take opportunity attacks. A destrachan farspeaker uses *drowsing thrum* when beset by multiple melee attackers.

The destrachans know where the hazards are in this room. They move, climbing and jumping as necessary, to avoid the weakened floors. Initially, they don't use the hazards in this room against the PCs—they want to eat, not push potential prey off the edge of the open floor. If pressed, however, the destrachans exploit the weakened floor and waterfall, using *buffeting bellow* to push PCs into the hazards.

Features of the Area

Pool: The water here hides rough floor. It is difficult terrain.

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.



9. Chamber of Horrors

Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

Setup

Klaus (K)
1 balhannoth (B)

Klaus, a Stormcrow, uses these old dining chambers to serve as a workshop for dissecting mutated creatures to assess their degree of corruption. The discarded body parts attracted a balhannoth. Klaus tosses the beast choice bits, and a strange amity has formed.

The balhannoth sensed the PCs when they entered this level, and it warned Klaus. Nevertheless, Klaus continues examining a corpse until his is disturbs, and then he attacks. The balhannoth clings to the ceiling, invisible. Do not place it until the PCs notice it or it attacks.

When the PCs open the doors, read:

The smell of death hits you. Three tables stand in this room. Bones and viscera, dissected bits of tentacles, eyes, and other body parts are heaped on two and the floor below them. Standing over a dead grimlock on the center table is a gaunt human wearing a tattered hide armor covered with bits of hair and blood. His eyes bulge, and a black-toothed smile stretches wide across his dirty face. He tears flesh from the corpse, and he cackles with glee. "Hah! Frrresh meat!" he says.

When the balhannoth appears, read:

A fat wormlike creature as big as a horse clings to the ceiling. It has a fanged maw, dripping gore and spittle. Bony spurs jut from its bruise-colored hide, and five tentacles whip out toward you.

Klaus (K) **Level 10 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant humanoid, human XP 1,000

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 204; **Bloodied** 102
AC 26 (28 against opportunity attacks); **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.

Bloody Rending (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Klaus makes a longsword attack and a short sword attack. If he hits one target with both attacks, that target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Skirmish +2d8
If Klaus moves 3 squares away from his starting point, he deals an extra 2d8 damage with melee attacks until the start of his next turn.

Unmarked Speed (move; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Klaus ends any mark affecting him and shifts 2 squares or moves 4 squares. The creature that marked him takes 5 psychic damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics +15, Dungeoneering +13, Nature +13
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+8)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 6 (+3)
Equipment hide armor, longsword, short sword

Balhannoth (B) **Level 13 Elite Lurker**
Large aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,600

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +16; blindsight 10
HP 216; **Bloodied** 108
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24
Immune gaze, illusion
Saving Throws +2
Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb); see also *reality shift*
Action Points 1

Tentacle (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage.

Whipping Tentacles (standard; at-will)
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage, and the target slides to any other square of the balhannoth's choosing within the burst area.

Combat Advantage
The balhannoth deals an extra 2d8 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Invisibility (minor; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
The balhannoth can turn invisible until the end of its next turn. It turns visible if it takes a standard action.

Reality Shift (move; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
The balhannoth can teleport 10 squares. Enemies adjacent to the balhannoth before it teleports are dazed until the end of its next turn. The balhannoth automatically gains combat advantage against creatures it teleports adjacent to.

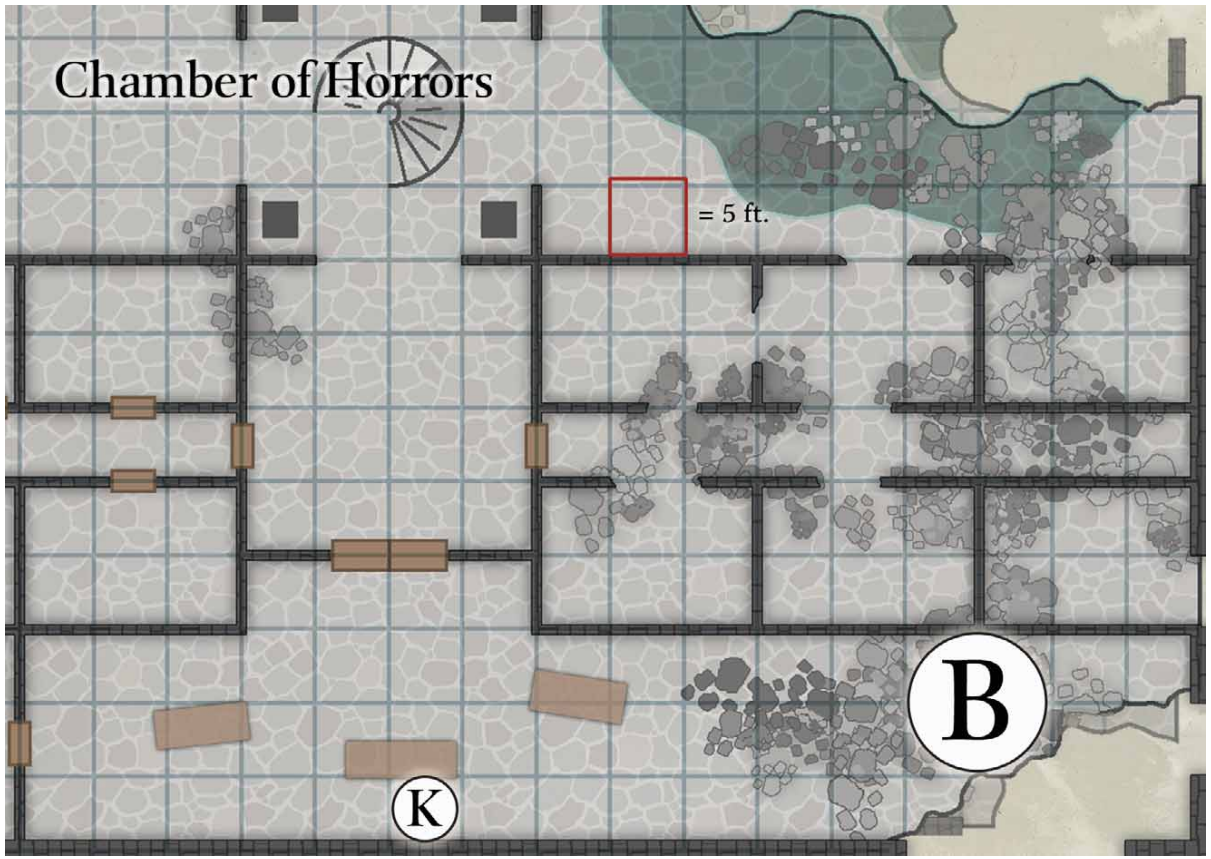
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Stealth +19
Str 19 (+15) **Dex** 27 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+11)
Con 24 (+13) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)

Tactics

Klaus attacks he PCs, all the while imploring them to surrender for study. He is a flurry of motion, roving over the battlefield to *skirmish*. Although he uses *bloody rending* whenever he can, he varies in his choice of targets—he just attacks whoever is in reach when he finishes moving. He doesn't fear powers that mark him, because he uses *unmarked speed* to move where he wills. Klaus keeps a running commentary on the wounds he inflicts as if he's studying the PCs.

The balhannoth first teleports amid the party using *reality shift*. It then uses *whipping tentacles*, spends a minor action to become invisible, and then spends its action point to *reality shift* to another position. Blocking the exit is its preferred place. Over the following rounds, it uses a similar combination to elude retaliation and to gain combat advantage against its targets.

Klaus fights until he is knocked out or killed. The balhannoth retreats if Klaus is down and it has fewer than 50 hit points. It also retreats when first bloodied if it has a chance of grabbing an unconscious or dead PC to drag off and eat.



Features of the Area

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Gap: Characters falling through the hole in the far wall drop 30 feet to level 1.

Tables: A square containing a table is difficult terrain. Characters can hop up on a table by spending an extra square of movement. The tables are also slippery with gore. If someone standing on a table is hit, that creature must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone. On the center table is a grimlock corpse, which increases the DC to 15. The balhannoth isn't affected this way.

Treasure: Hidden among the rubble is one parcel of valuables—money, gems, or art objects. Klaus has another parcel, which is likely to be a magic item.

Conclusion

It is difficult to save Klaus. If the PCs take him alive, he shrieks and screams while conscious. The PCs can pry no information from him but ravings about meat and cutting and eating. They can quiet him only with Bluff (DC 18), Diplomacy (DC 21), or Intimidate (DC 23), as one might do in a skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures). If he's silenced this way, he whimpers and weeps, whining, *"Klaus is so hungry, so thirsty. I hunger. The* Tear, *it fed me, but no more. Now you must. You must. Feed me!"* If the PCs promise him food, they receive +2 to further checks. Failure drives Klaus mad with rage and bloodlust. He shrieks and snaps until knocked unconscious or released.

Each minute Klaus is allowed to shriek, he has a 20% chance of attracting a grimlock patrol. He cannot be calmed, so he must be knocked out or killed. If the PCs leave him bound, he uses a healing surge (51 HP) and tries to escape when he awakens. The PCs might hear his screams and calls for help from other areas. If any remain, a grimlock patrol comes across him 15 minutes later and releases him. With the help of the grimlocks, he then tracks the PCs down to kill them.

Only if Denva is guarding him does Klaus quietly wait without intimidation, and even then only if restrained. If left unrestrained under Denva's watch, he attacks her, and she kills him. Traveling back to Wellspring with Klaus is a nightmare. He is also the most troublesome if the PCs must defend the "false ones" from Harrowfolk judgment, an angle you can emphasize to maximize drama.

10. Holding Chambers

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

Setup

Shantaira (S)
1 beholder eye of flame (E)

Shantaira has subsisted on vermin because Elomir has not thought to bring her food, and her guard couldn't care less if she starves to death. The poor treatment and loneliness has pushed her into true madness. She now believes the eye of flame is her devoted protector (see Tactics), and it isn't above using this fact.

As the PCs approach the area, read:
You hear faint murmuring coming from ahead.

Perception DC 15: *It is clearly a female voice, singing, but the words are nonsense.*

When the PCs see the beholder, read:
A spheroid creature bristling with eyestalks hovers here. Plates of red chitin cover it. In the center of its body blinks a single, immense eye, red and rippling with orange light.

Once Shantaira joins the fight, read:
Appearing in your midst is a wide-eyed female eladrin dressed in long orange robes. She grips a flaming staff in both hands, and shrieks in rage as your reflections appear in the segments of her overlarge amber eyes.

Tactics

The eye of flame engages the PCs from a distance, hovering near the 30-foot ceiling. On its first turn, it uses its *telekinesis ray* to open the window on Shantaira's cell door. It also uses its *fear ray* to cause melee attackers to run away from it, or it uses its *telekinesis ray* to hurl weaker melee attackers away. It fails to do so only when it knows its wounds are such that its *fiery burst* is about to go off. Once the *wall of fire* appears (see below), the beholder uses *telekinesis ray* to throw PCs into the flames.

Beholder Eye of Flame (E) **Level 13 Elite Artillery**
Large aberrant magical beast XP 1,600

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +15; all-around vision, darkvision
Eyes of the Beholder aura 5; at the start of each enemy's turn, if that creature is within the aura and in the eye of flame's line of sight, the eye of flame uses one random *eye ray* power against that creature.
HP 240; **Bloodied** 102; see also *fiery burst*
AC 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 6 (hover)
Action Points 1

Bite (standard; at-will)
+18 vs. AC; 2d6 damage.

Central Eye (minor; at-will)
Ranged 8; the target gains vulnerable 10 fire, and any attack that deals fire damage to the target also deals ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends both).

Eye Rays (standard; at-will) ✦ see text
The eye of flame can use up to two *eye ray* powers (chosen from the list below), at least one of which must be a *fire ray*. Each power must target a different creature. Using *eye rays* does not provoke opportunity attacks.
1—Fire Ray (Fire): Ranged 8; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.
2—Telekinesis Ray: Ranged 8; +17 vs. Fortitude; the target slides 4 squares.
3—Fear Ray (Fear): Ranged 8; +17 vs. Will; the target moves its speed away from the eye of flame by the safest route possible and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Fiery Burst (when first bloodied and again when the eye of flame is reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fire**
Close burst 2; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Str 10 (+6) **Dex** 20 (+11) **Wis** 19 (+10)
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 23 (+12)

Shantaira (S) **Level 12 Elite Controller**
Medium aberrant humanoid, eladrin XP 1,400

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 240; **Bloodied** 120
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +2; +7 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *fey step*
Action Points 1

Fire Staff (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 damage plus 1d8 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Fire Smite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 damage plus 1d8 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage. Shantaira makes a secondary attack. *Secondary Attack*: Targets two enemies within 5 of the original target; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage.

Flame Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 6 fire damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Fire Shroud (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Fire**
Close burst 3; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Wall of Fire (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Conjuration, Fire**
Area wall 8 (4 high) within 10; a wall of fire appears, blocking line of sight and rendering its space heavily obscured. It lasts until the end of Shantaira next turn. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 1d6 + 5 fire damage. Entering the wall's space costs 3 extra squares of movement. If a creature moves into the wall's space or starts its turn there, that creature takes 3d6 + 5 fire damage.

Fey Step (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
Shantaira can teleport 5 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Elven
Skills Arcana +19
Str 10 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 22 (+12) **Cha** 18 (+10)
Equipment robes, staff

Shantaira uses *fey step* to emerge from her cell after the eye of flame opens the door's window. She conjures a *wall of fire* to block the PCs' retreat, sustaining the wall as long as possible. Shantaira then supports the eye of flame by shooting a *flame lance* or landing a *fire smite* each turn. Her targeting favors those the beholder's *central eye* has affected, which she inherently senses. When more than one foe is adjacent to her or within the potential area, she exudes her *fire shroud* without concern for catching the beholder in the burst.

The beholder fights to the death, unwilling to let lesser creatures drive it away. Shantaira can be convinced to surrender (Intimidate DC 22) if she has fewer than 50 hit points and the beholder is slain.

Features of the Area

Doors: The doors throughout are unlocked, except for the one blocking Shantaira's cell (Thievery DC 25 to open).

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Treasure: Shantaira still has one parcel, which is likely to be a magic item such as a +3 *staff of fiery might*.

Conclusion

If the PCs take Shantaira alive, she has little but foul curses, spit, and screams as answers to questions. The characters can calm her down by using Bluff (DC 17), Diplomacy (DC 19), or Intimidate (DC 26), as one might do in a skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures). Success calms her down enough for her to answer questions. Failure drives her over the brink, making her useless but docile. Use the following answers as a guide for any questions the PCs ask.

Who are you? *"I am Shantaira."*

What are you? *"Blessed. Blessed by the Tear of Ioun."*

What are you doing here? *"I failed my love, and I burn alone until I have his forgiveness."*

Who is your love? *"Elomir, leader of the Stormcrows. He is vessel of the Tear. I burn for him. Take me to him?"*

Where is the *Tear*? *"Gone. It's gone. The horror. We have been betrayed . . . robbed . . . forsaken. I tried to explain, tried to warn him, but I failed. Now I burn."*

What happened? *"Strangers took the Tear. They left us with only this fire inside."*

Who was this stranger? *"Creatures of shadow . . . smoke . . . shadow . . ."*

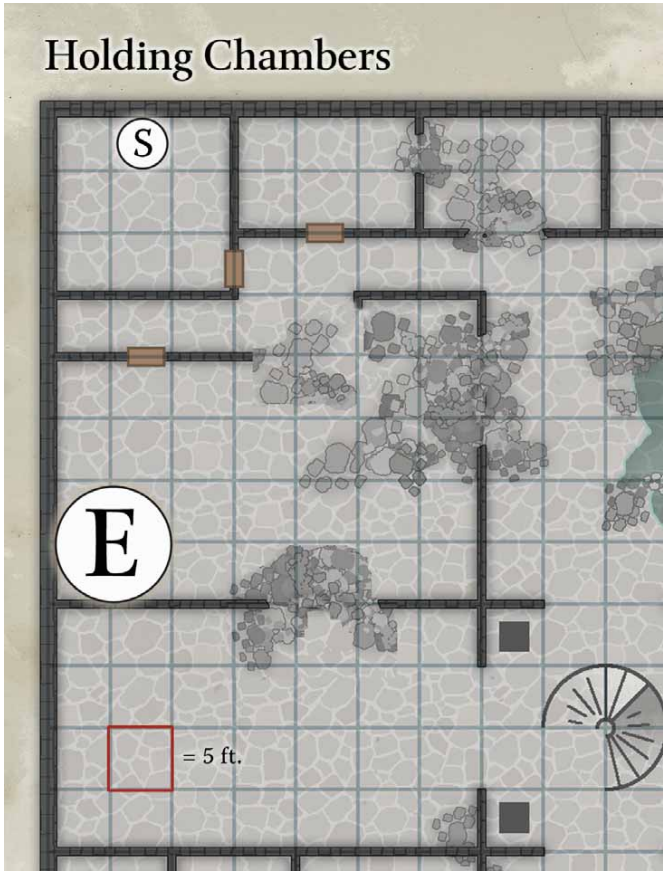
Where is your love now? *"He mourns the loss of the Tear at the divine conduit, atop this Forlorn Tower. He sends for the grasping ones to find it in the accursed valley. Please take me to him?"*

How did you come to be here? *"An angel in mortal flesh sent us here. He wore the skin of a man named Cylus."*

Can you tell us more about this Cylus? *"He is an angel."*

Beyond these questions, Shantaira slips back into her mad state, gibbering and conjuring fire in her hand to stare at it. Taking Shantaira farther into the tower is dangerous. If the PCs confront Elomir, and they bring Shantaira along for this climactic battle, she fights against the characters to save her lover. The only safe choice is to leave her behind, unconscious, bound, or both.

The PCs probably have to slay Elomir. If they do, but they rescue Shantaira, she asks after her lover constantly on the trip back. The PCs must lie or dissemble (Bluff DC 17). If Shantaira finds out Elomir is slain, she flies into a fury, the results of which are for you to adjudicate.



11. Hall of Reflection

Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Setup

2 helmed horrors (H)
3 horrid grells (G)

The helmed horrors dwell here as they have since the days when the Kaorti ruled the tower. They do not attack until someone else starts a fight. Grells lurk out of sight, attacking as soon as they sense the PCs.

When the PCs enter this room, read:

This enormous room fills the entire floor of the tower. Four massive black pillars support the ceiling, though holes offer access to the upper levels and the sky beyond. Water spills down from above in a torrent, and it runs across the floor to drain into the lower levels.

Two floating suits of plate armor, lit from within by fiery light, descend to the floor. Gripping immense swords, they seem to judge you in silence.

Perception DC 32: *Something lurks behind the pillars in this room. You hear a slithering from behind those supports.*

Waterfall

The waterfall is likely to come into play here. Creatures within 2 squares of it take –8 to Perception checks to hear. Those entering the space containing the waterfall, indicated by the light blue line on the map, are subject to an attack.

2 Corroded Helmed Horrors (H) **Level 11 Soldier**
Medium elemental animate (construct) XP 600 each

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision
HP 112; **Bloodied** 56
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Immune charm, disease, fear, poison, sleep
Speed 6, fly 6 (clumsy)

⊕ **Elemental Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon; Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder**
+20 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage plus 1d10 cold, fire lightning, or thunder damage (helmed horror's choice).

⸸ **Blade Sweep** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon; Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder**
The helmed horror makes an elemental greatsword attack against two different targets within reach.

Tactical Step (free, when the helmed horror hits with an opportunity attack; at-will)
The helmed horror shifts 2 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial
Skills Insight +15
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+5)
Equipment greatsword

⸸ Waterfall
Opportunity Action **Melee**
Target: The creature that entered a waterfall square.
Attack: +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target falls prone and slides 3 squares toward the nearby ravine.
Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied before entering the waterfall and its move action ends immediately.
Special: If the target goes over the edge of the ravine (Athletics DC 25 to climb near the waterfall, DC 20 elsewhere), it falls 80 feet into a shallow stream.

3 Horrid Grells (H) **Level 9 Elite Soldiers**
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 800 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +10; blindsight 12
HP 192; **Bloodied** 96
AC 26 (28 while the horrid grell has an enemy grabbed); **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19
Immune gaze
Saving Throws +2
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

⸸ **Tentacle Grab** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed. The grell can grab only one creature at a time.

⸸ **Venomous Bite** (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Grabbed target only; +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Stealth +18
Str 12 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+3)

Tactics

As soon as the grells sense the PCs, the monsters attack. With the aid of the helmed horrors, the grells focus on *tentacle grab* attacks so they can make *venomous bite* attacks as soon as possible. If desperate, a grell might drag a PC to a hole on this level, and throw that character down.

The helmed horrors delay until after the PCs or the grells attack. They attack as a unit, the pair focusing on one or two primary targets, usually the most dangerous-looking foe first. Each one flies, lands to attack, then flies again as needed. The helmed horrors try to stay close to as many PCs as possible, to control the flow of battle and maximize the chance to use *tactical step*.

Helmed horrors fight until destroyed. The grells continue until one or more is slain and those remaining have 50 or fewer hit points. Then, they try to retreat by flying out of the tower. They don't risk opportunity attacks to do so, and they don't withdraw if they seem to be winning despite their wounds.

Development

Elomir and his allies hear any battle in this place. There is a cumulative 20% chance each round after the fighting starts for Elomir to send the grell philosopher down through one of the holes in the floor to deal with the intruders. If the grell philosopher shows up, the horrid grells don't flee until after it is dead and they are injured as described in Tactics.

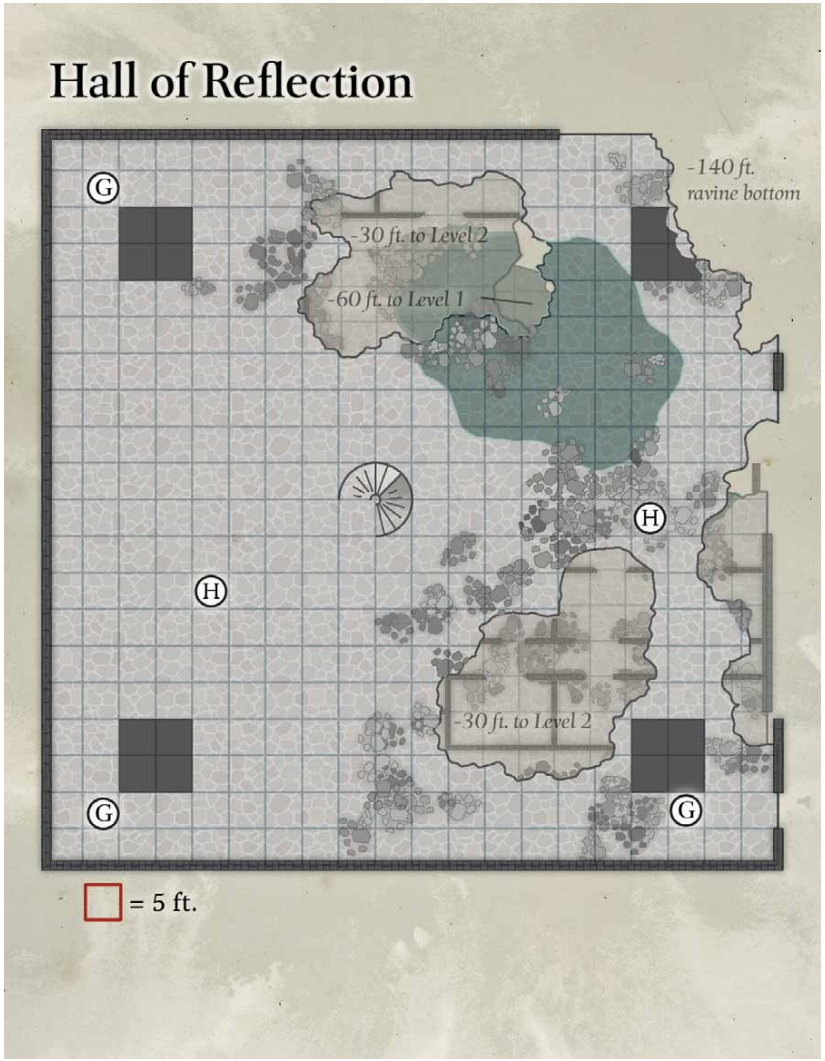
Features of the Area

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Collapsed Floor: Large holes in the floor offer easy passage back down to level 2 (30 feet), or 1 (60 feet).

Pillars: Three of the four pillars (Athletics DC 15 to climb) in this room support the ceiling overhead. The pillars are blocking terrain.

Treasure: Most of the papers and books once found here are gone or destroyed. Still, two parcels remain in the mess. Here, the treasure takes the form of gems, art objects, scrolls, rituals, and valuable books such as a leather tome from the time of Bael Turath, describing the rise of the tiefling empire.



12. Divine Conduit

Encounter Level 15 (6,000 XP)

Setup

Elomir (E)
1 feaster (F)
1 grell philosopher (G)
2 destrachan Far voices (D)

The Divine Conduit, as the place has come to be called, is where Elomir, leader of the Stormcrows, spends nearly all his time. He cannot guess where the *Tear* went, though he suspects treachery from his comrades.

The grell philosopher might have joined the battle in encounter 11. If so, it is not part of this fight.

When the PCs enter this area, read:

Huge sections of floor have collapsed from this level. A flood of water cascades from an overhang, hundreds of feet above, to land here and spill down into the tower's interior. In the southern corner rises a dais on which sits an old iron chair. A faded red carpet, now turned sickly pink, lies before the throne and trails off to the north. Just before the carpet is a large section of scorched stone. The pattern around a hemispherical depression suggests something large exploded there.

Standing on the edge of the tattered carpet is an elf warrior dressed in shining scale armor. On his left arm is strapped a battered heavy shield emblazoned with a stylized raven clutching lightning in its claws. He wields a longsword in his right hand. The way he holds himself, the gape of his mouth, the dark circles beneath his eyes, and the unsightly scabrous skin on one side of his face combine to make him gruesome and fearsome.

Feaster (F) **Level 10 Elite Soldier**
Large aberrant beast XP 1,000
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision
HP 214; **Bloodied** 107
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Immune disease
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5, swim 5
Action Points 1

⊕ **Tentacle** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +17 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage, and the target is pulled 2 squares and grabbed.

⨽ **Tentacle Flurry** (standard; at-will)
Feaster makes two tentacle attacks. It can grab up to two targets.

⨽ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +17 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage, ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target contracts festering doom (see sidebar).

Spying Eye
If Feaster can hide in such a way that it leaves only its eyestalk exposed, it gains a +5 bonus to Stealth. The bonus ends if Feaster moves.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +11 (+16 while using *spying eye*)
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 19 (+9) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+3)

Flanking him are two reptilian creatures, stooped and eyeless with overlarge tube-shaped maws.

"Brave indeed for you to return to the scene of your crime, thieves" says the elf in a voice that has several tones at once. "Return the Tear to me, and you die quickly. Or have you come to slay me?"

Perception DC 21: *A great heap of glistening gray flesh, beaded with moisture from the waterfall, lurks here, its three eyes set on a tentacle. Its huge maw contains row upon row of black teeth.*

Elomir (E) **Level 12 Elite Soldier**
Medium aberrant humanoid, elf XP 1,400
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
Psychic Vortex (**Psychic**) aura 1; if an enemy Elomir has marked starts its turn in the aura, that enemy takes 5 psychic damage and is slowed until the start of its next turn.
HP 238; **Bloodied** 119
Regeneration 5
AC 30; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Psychic Agony Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, ongoing 5 psychic damage, and the target is marked (save ends both).

⨽ **Dual Attack** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Elomir makes two melee basic attacks.

⨽ **Shared Agony** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Must target an enemy Elomir has marked; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 8 damage, ongoing 10 psychic damage, and if an ally of the target starts a turn adjacent to the target, that creature takes 10 psychic damage (save ends both).

⨽ **Disruptive Smite** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage, and whenever the target is the target of a power that has the healing keyword, it takes 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)
Elomir can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.

Wild Step
Elomir ignores difficult terrain when he shifts.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Elven
Skills Athletics +17, Intimidate +16
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 10 (+6)
Con 20 (+1) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+11)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, longsword

Festering Doom	Level 10 Disease
Black sores appear on the skin, oozing black filth and vital fluids when exposed to healing magic.	**Attack:** +14 vs. Fortitude **Endurance:** Improve DC 21; maintain 18; worsen 15 or lower

The target is cured

Initial Effect: The target loses one healing surge until cured.

Each time the target is bloodied or the target of a healing effect, it takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it dies.

Final Effect: From the time of the failed Endurance check, each time the target takes damage or is the target of a healing effect, it takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends). If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it dies.

Grell Philosopher (G) **Level 11 Elite Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,200

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +12; blindsight 12
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
AC 27; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23
Immune gaze; **Resist** 20 lightning
Saving Throws +2
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover)
Action Points 1

Tentacle Rake (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Lightning Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning**
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Psychic Storm (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic, Zone**
Area burst 2 within 10; +14 vs. Will; 3d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). The psychic storm is a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any creature entering the zone is dazed (save ends).

Venomous Mind (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target must choose a random target for any melee attacks it makes (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +13, Stealth +20
Str 14 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 16 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+6)

2 Destrachan Far Voices (D) **Level 15 Artillery**
Large aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,200 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +14; blindsight 20
HP 122; **Bloodied** 61
AC 28; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25
Immune gaze; **Resist** 15 thunder
Speed 8, climb 4

Claw (standard; at-will)
+20 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

Sound Pulse (standard; at-will) ✦ **Thunder**
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 8 thunder damage.

Bellowing Blast (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Thunder**
Close blast 5; +19 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 8 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Reverberate (standard; encounter) ✦ **Thunder**
Close burst 2; +19 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 thunder damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the destrachan far voice's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Skills Bluff +12, Stealth +17
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 26 (+15) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)

If the grell philosopher is present, read:
Hovering to the side is a floating brain that trails a nest of writhing tentacles. A beak, nestled in calloused gray matter, clacks with excitement.

Regardless of how the negotiations go, Elomir's attacks just after the PCs deny having the *Tear of Ioun*.

Carpet and Scorch Marks

Leading up to the dais is a sun-bleached carpet, stained and torn. The Kaorti orrery also left signs of its passing nearby. Strong echoes of the Far Realm remain here, tearing at the mind and body with foul visions and disturbing apparitions. When a non-aberrant creature starts its turn in such a square, it is attacked.

Far Realm Taint
Opportunity Action **Melee**
Target: The triggering creature
Attack: +14 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed until the start of its next turn. Once a creature has been dazed once, subsequent successful attacks instead apply -2 to defenses until the start of the target's next turn.

Waterfall

The waterfall might come into play. Creatures within 2 squares of it take –8 to Perception checks to hear. Those entering the space containing the waterfall, indicated by the light blue line on the map, are subject to an attack.

Waterfall

Opportunity Action **Melee**

Target: The creature that entered a waterfall square.

Attack: +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls prone and slides 3 squares toward the nearby ravine.

Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied before entering the waterfall and its move action ends immediately.

Special: If the target goes over the edge of the ravine (Athletics DC 25 to climb near the waterfall, DC 20 elsewhere), it falls 80 feet into a shallow stream.

Tactics

Elomir hurls himself at the PCs with furious and continuous curses and accusations. He first spreads his attacks out to mark a few PCs, then chooses one to target with *shared agony*. As soon as he sees a PC likely to need healing, he employs *disruptive smite*. Elomir repeats these tactics as necessary (and as his recharges dictate). He won't allow any of his followers to throw PCs from the tower, fearing he'll lose the *Tear of Ioun*.

The destrachans support their leader by focusing their ranged attacks against controllers and ranged strikers, wading into battle to deliver their *bellowing blasts* only when two or more enemies come within range. They are careful not to hit their allies.

The grell philosopher drops a *psychic storm* on the largest group of PCs, and then uses its *lightning lance* to pick off the survivors. It is cautious about how its *psychic storm* affects its allies, so it's conservative with the power despite recharge. If any enemy draws within range of the grell's *venomous mind* power, it uses that power instead. It uses its tentacles to escape those who attack it in melee.

The Feaster wades into battle from behind the PCs. It grabs PCs, and then bites one grabbed foe per round.

All creatures here fight to the death.

Features of the Area

Collapsed Floors: Much of this level's floor has collapsed into the lower levels. A fall to the level below deals 2d10 points of falling damage, while falling two levels down deals 5d10 damage.

Iron Chair: The iron chair is difficult terrain, and it counts as a low obstacle.

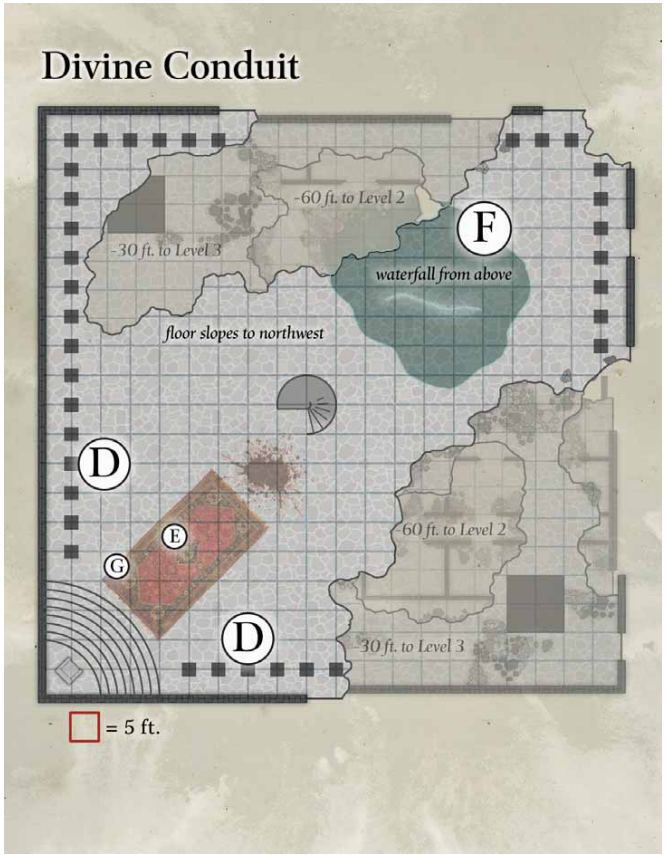
Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Slope: The floor leans where the waters hit the surface. Squares adjacent to where the water impacts cost 3 squares of movement to enter.

Treasure: Elomir has a large cache of valuables behind his throne. He has three parcels, one of which is a magic item.

Conclusion

Elomir has changed the most, having been in proximity to the *Tear of Ioun* the longest. It has erased nearly all the warrior's memories, except vague familiarities and feelings, leaving behind an empty husk filled with unspeakable darkness. If the PCs somehow subdue Elomir, he fights them whenever he regains consciousness.



About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb works as a freelance designer for Wizards of the Coast; his recent credits include *Martial Power*™, *Draconomicon*™, and the *Forgotten Realms*® *Player's Guide*. Robert lives in Tennessee with his incredibly patient wife Stacee and his pride of fiendish werecats, but is happiest when chained to his desk, toiling for his dark masters in Seattle.

PARAGON
11-20

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

by Bruce R. Cordell

illustration by David Griffith
cartography by Robert Lee

RUINS OF STARMANTLE

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STARMANTLE WAS GONE.

In its place was a madman's fancy. Translucent emerald spires reached from the earth in wild abandon. Each hummed a single flutelike note. In their thousands, the spires produced an atonal melody that clawed at sanity.

The creature was naked. Its flesh was drawn tightly over its bones. A carnivore's sharp teeth clacked in its mouth. Eyes like hot coals communicating a ravenous appetite so pure it was nearly spiritual.

Fissures gaped between the spires. Some harbored a flickering blue glow.

It was the same terrible blue hue Raidon Kane recalled so well . . .

The monk backpedaled a dozen yards, worry creasing his brows. A shadow fell across him and he looked up.

Obsidian masses slowly drifted over the open ground above the spires and ravines. Irregular and without coherent form, a palpable animosity emanated from them nonetheless. Whether animate or actually alive, Raidon couldn't tell. Not that he particular wanted to know. His eyes ached as they scanned the insane vista.

He blinked. He would find no answers here.

But Starmantle's raucous skyline tugged at his thoughts, unearthing a memory of his daughter Ailyn.

"Oh, no," he whispered.

The shock of his awakening had robbed him of why he'd set forth . . . how long ago? Mortal fear for Ailyn's safety squeezed the breath out of his chest.

"I must go to Nathlekh," he exclaimed. "She's waiting—"

A screech snatched his attention back to the demolished city. A figure bounded up from the nearest blue-burning fissure. Three more gibbering creatures appeared over the ravine's lip as the first pointed at Raidon.

It charged.

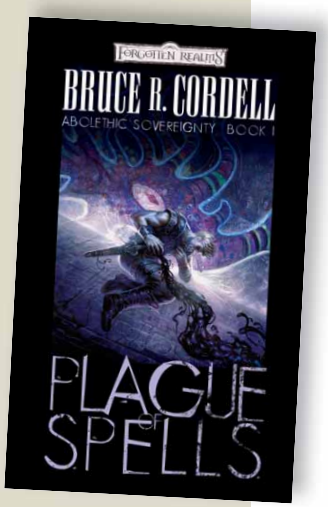
The creature was naked. Its flesh was drawn tightly over its bones. A carnivore's sharp teeth clacked in its mouth, and eyes like hot coals fixed on the monk, communicating a ravenous appetite so pure it was nearly spiritual.

Was it a ghoul?

A seam on the charging creature's stomach opened, revealing a hollow, toothed cavity. A tentacle-tongue emerged from the abdominal mouth, flicking like a purple flame.

No. It was not a ghoul, or at least not completely. It was something aberrant.

PLAGUE OF SPELLS



In the novel *Plague of Spells*, Raidon Kane survived the changefire that swept the world when the goddess of magic was murdered. With everyone he knew and cared about dead, Raidon must find the strength to fight against the rise of an elder evil that threatens to end mortal kind.

Plague of Spells describes several unique locations ideal for a D&D game encounter. One is on the outskirts of the Ruins of Starmantle, as adapted here.

http://ww2.wizards.com/Books/Wizards/Products/default.aspx?doc=217707400

The encounter that follows is a recreation of a battle that takes place in the novel *Plague of Spells*. Use this encounter as a Side Trek in your campaign, drop it into an existing adventure, or just steal the two new ghoul variants—it's up to you!

Encounter: Starmantle Periphery

Encounter Level 13 (4,800 XP)

Setup

2 plague-changed ghoul eaters (G)
1 plague-changed ghoul king (K)
1 darkpact ghoul initiate (D)

The encounter begins when PCs enter the area and come within 6 squares of the smaller ravine (for instance, as when one has nearly crossed the fallen spire that bridges the larger ravine). This proximity triggers the appearance of four ghouls, which emerge from the small ravine. Place the ghouls as noted on the tactical map. The ghouls have become desensitized to the various hazards of the area noted under features, except for the soaring stones.

Allow the PCs to interact with the plague-changed ghoul king (see Opportunity to Parlay) if they desire. However, the hunger of the ghouls soon overwhelms the king's desire to talk.

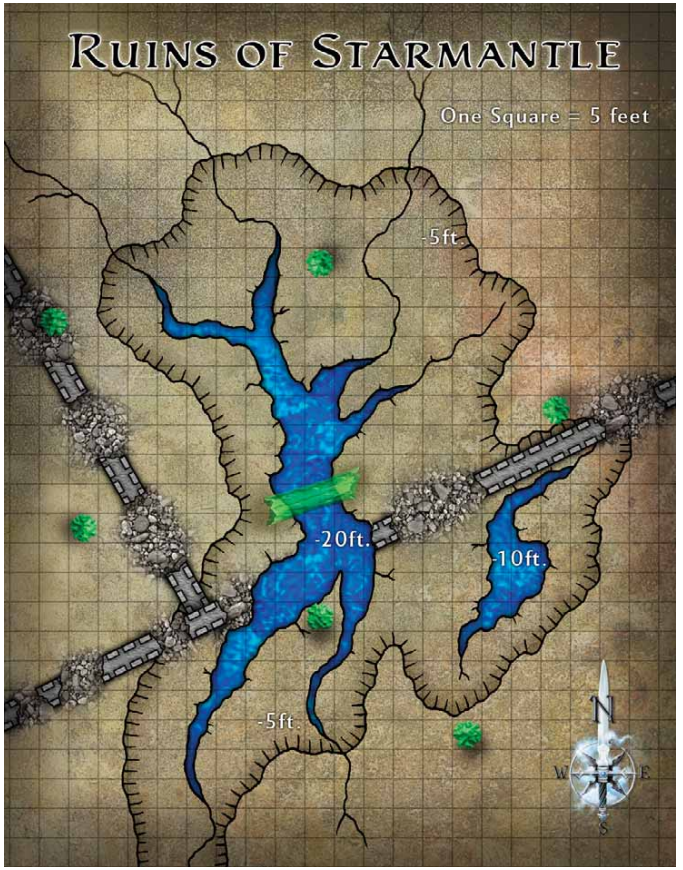
When PCs enter the area, read:

The ruins of a city obliterated by a god's deathspasm lie ahead. The city's walls are tumbled and pierced by a thicket of translucent green spires that spread away in all directions. Each spire hums a single flutelike note that combine in their thousands to produce a melody that claws at your sanity. Fissures gape between the spires, some of which harbor a flickering blue glow. Chunks of black stone, cast adrift from the earth, soar languidly overhead, just clearing the spiretops.

When then encounter begins, read:

A humanoid figure bounds up from the smaller blue-burning fissure. Three more follow it. The creatures' flesh is drawn tightly over their bones. Carnivore teeth clack in their mouths, and burning eyes communicate hunger without end. One of the creatures wears the tatters of ancient clothing, while the other three bare gaping, toothed mouths on their abdomens, from which tentacle-like tongues of purple-blue flame emerge.

The largest of this latter group hisses, "See my brothers? Supper!" Blood, not its own, darkens its cheeks and chin. Its lower, abdominal mouth chomps and writhes, and grinding noises issue from it as it chews on something white and red inside.



Plague-changed Ghoul King (K) **Level 13 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,600
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 258; **Bloodied** 129
AC 31; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 22
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8, climb 4
Action Points 1

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the plague-changed ghoul king's next turn (save ends).

⸸ **Ghoul Pack** (standard; at-will)
Before the attack, the plague-changed ghoul king lets one adjacent ally or an ally adjacent to its target shift 1 square. +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the plague-changed ghoul king's next turn

Ghoul Fervor (minor 1/turn; at-will)
One ally within line of sight makes an immediate basic attack.

Gut Tongue
When the plague-changed ghoul king damages an immobilized, stunned, or unconscious target with its *claws* or *ghoul pack* attacks, the target also takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +15
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+6)
Con 17 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+7)

Darkpact Ghoul Initiate (D) **Level 13 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,600
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
Nauseating Stench aura 6; a living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks.
HP 264; **Bloodied** 132
AC 29; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed 7; see also *baleful step*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⸸ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The darkpact ghoul makes two claw attacks.

⸸ **Ravenous Bite** (standard; at-will)
Targets a bloodied creature; +18 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage, or 3d12 + 6 damage and weakened (save ends) against an immobilized target.

Baleful Step (move; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**
The ghoul teleports up to 6 squares. Each enemy adjacent to the ravenous ghoul after it teleports is dazed until the end of the ravenous ghoul's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 23 (+12) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+8)

2 Plague-changed Ghoul Eaters (G) **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 800
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 129; **Bloodied** 64
AC 29; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 8, climb 4

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Gut Tongue
When the plague-changed ghoul eater damages an immobilized, stunned, or unconscious target with its *claws* attack, the target also takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +15
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+6)
Con 17 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+7)

Tactics

The two plague-changed ghoul eaters rush straight toward the closest hero with little thought to strategy, though if the opportunity to flank one foe becomes available, they will do so. The plague-changed ghoul king delays, if necessary, until the other plague-changed ghouls have acted, then it uses *ghoul fervor* as a minor action to give one ghoul a free basic attack before it makes its own attack. The plague-changed ghoul king uses *ghoul pack* each round, hoping to surround at least one hero, after which the plague-changed ghouls can use *gut maw* and *gut tongue* attacks at their leisure. The ghoul king continues to use *fervor* once per round to give its ghoul allies an additional basic attack.

Meanwhile, the darkpact ghoul initiate circles wide around the combat and central fissure (initially running) to come up behind the heroes, hoping to catch them off guard with its first *baleful step*.

...the darkpact ghoul initiate circles wide around the combat and central fissure (initially running) to come up behind the heroes...

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light (unless the encounter occurs at night).

Spires: The emerald-hued spires are composed of a resinous material that yet echoes with the wild magic of their creation. The audible tone is terribly distracting to those not used to it; players and other creatures new to the area are dazed while they are in a square adjacent to a green spire.

Soaring Stones: Some of the terrain in the area defies gravity. Motes of earth sail through the sky, but are drawn to violent activity. At the top of each round, roll a d20. On a roll of 10 or higher, an overflying stone swoops down and crashes into a random combatant (roll randomly to determine target).

+16 vs. Reflex; 1d6+3 damage, and slide the target 2 squares. Targets always slide toward the closest ravine edge.

Spellplague Ravine: Live spellplague burns in the bottom of both the 20-foot and 10-foot deep ravines. A fall into either ravine deals 2d10 or 1d10 points of damage, respectively. Unless a character spends an hour or more within the ravine, they do not come to harm from the pocket of active spellplague (see Plaguelands in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*); however, the blue fire in the ravine capers across those who fall into the area in a menacing manner. A DC 22 Athletics check is required to climb out of either ravine.

The smaller ravine contains the ghouls' hoard: a level 14 magic item and 500 gp.

Fallen Spire Bridge: This spire does not hum like those that stand, but does provide a stable method for getting across the larger ravine.

Old City Wall: The wall is only about 10 feet tall in the sections where it is intact (Athletics DC 18 to climb).

Opportunity to Parlay

If PCs try to talk with the talking ghoul, it trades insults and perhaps even information for a little while. If you have plot points to convey, the ghoul king might know them. But eventually, the ghouls attack en masse.

About the Author

Bruce R. Cordell is an Origins award-winning game designer for Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and co-wrote the new *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*™. His long list of professional credits include the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*™ and *Libris Mortis*™ supplements.

The Challenge of Skill Challenges

BY MIKE MEARLS
illustrations by Raven Mimura

Welcome back to the monthly column on the challenges of skill challenges. Hopefully, that lame opening line isn't bad enough to drive you away! If you missed the first installment, you should go back and read it now. This installment picks up where it left off.

Last time, I laid down some basic ground rules for building good skill challenges. I laid out four basic rules for skill challenge design. I used the first two rules to assess a skill challenge I need to design for my campaign. Luckily, those rules helped point out some weaknesses with my first approach to the challenge. In this installment, I use rule #3 to plug those gaps and build a usable, engaging menu of skills and options.

As a reminder, my skill challenge covers the characters' ability to remain hidden in the town of Suderham, a place controlled by evil slave lords and their minions. The slave lords sit atop a vast criminal conspiracy, directing raids on coastal towns to capture innocent folk and force them into slavery. The characters must sneak into Suderham to defeat the slave lords and liberate their victims.

The skill challenge requires the characters to keep a low profile in town, lest the guard uncover their deception and arrest them. It's much easier for the PCs to gather clues and make plans if they can move around town. If the guard hunts them down, the PCs must spend as much time dodging their enemies as making plans to defeat the slavers.

Initially, I wanted the skill challenge to focus on the Bluff and Stealth skills. However, my first two rules of skill challenge design showed that such a choice could make for bad play. Now, it's back to planning using rule #3.

Rule #3: Skills challenges are still like fights. A variety of options makes them compelling.

Avoiding the town guard requires an effort from the entire party. On one hand, that's great because everyone has a direct stake in the challenge. On the other, it forces characters who might be patently terrible at a specific skill to drag the party down, like a dwarf paladin in plate armor, toting a large shield, and sporting a Dexterity of 8. Characters can and will have weak spots—areas of near ineptitude—that come into play. That dwarf thinks twice before using Acrobatics to inch across a narrow bridge. On the other hand, it's frustrating and boring when that dwarf has no options in a skill challenge other than a Stealth check, especially when the entire party's success rests on that check.

Drawing from my lists of common and rare skills, along with my breakdown of skills by role in the last

installment, here's a list of skills I'd like the challenge to use. I settled for eight skills, because I aim for a total list of skills equal to 2 + the number of characters in the party.

Athletics
Bluff
Diplomacy
History
Insight
Intimidate
Stealth
Streetwise

I didn't choose these skills with any specific scene or use in mind. Instead, I picked out skills that seemed like they could be germane. The next step is to break the skills down into primary and secondary skills. Primary skills push the characters closer to success, while secondary ones provide useful benefits without granting the party additional successes.

Athletics: At first blush, this skill might seem useless to evading detection. However, a smart group can climb a building and move across the roof, vault rubble and debris in garbage-choked alleys, and otherwise find hidden paths to avoid detection or escape a pursuing guard patrol. I'll make this a primary skill, both because I like the idea of roof-top chases and because it gives the fighter-types something to do. It will represent the party's ability to take advantage of urban terrain to move about in secret.

Bluff: Originally, I didn't want to use this skill because not many characters can train in it. However, with a robust list that includes five common skills, I'm happy to bring it (along with Stealth) into the skill challenge. There should be enough for the party to do that two rare skills on the list won't drag down the game. Bluff has some obvious uses in this challenge. The party can trick the guard into letting them go or fool observers into thinking they are harmless travelers. However, I'm going to make it a secondary skill used to cancel out failures with other skills.

Diplomacy: A quick word of friendship is perhaps the best tool in defusing a tense situation. Plus, I like the idea of using Diplomacy as a catch-all skill for the party's ability to move around town without attracting too much attention. Diplomacy serves as a primary skill in this challenge.

History: I love using knowledge skills to let the PCs draw on lore that proves useful in a skill challenge. History lets the characters recall important facts about Suderham's past that could prove useful. For example, the PCs might realize that the pawn shop across the street was once a temple to Pelor with a ceremonial garden behind it, the perfect place to hide for a short time. History is a secondary skill that grants bonuses to primary skill checks.

Insight: Reading people is a useful skill in heading off trouble before it starts. Insight is a secondary skill in this skill challenge. I think I'll make it very useful by assigning it the ability to allow you to reroll any one skill check.

Intimidate: If you can't trick them, scaring the heck out of them is the next best option. Personally, I like Intimidate a lot because fighter-types usually have it on their class lists, and many classes and races favor Charisma. Intimidate is a primary skill in this challenge.

Stealth: Staying out of sight is the best way to avoid trouble. Stealth is a primary skill in this challenge.

Streetwise: If there's any skill that should be useful in an urban skill challenge, it's Streetwise. This skill represents the group's ability to avoid trouble, pick the best streets to walk along by predicting guard routes and crowd movements, and how best to handle local bureaucrats and guards. Streetwise is a primary skill in this challenge.

So, here's my breakdown of skills:

Primary Skills: Athletics, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Stealth, Streetwise

Secondary Skills: Bluff, History, Insight

Other Options

With skills nailed down, it's time to look at a few other ways that the PCs might be able to handle the guards and people of Suderham. Skill challenges, as their name suggests, focus on skills. However, D&D is a game of imagination and critical thinking. Many times, the characters take actions that fall outside of the system but should have an important effect on the game. You can cover many of these by simply giving a character a +2 or +4 bonus on a check, but some actions are so compelling and clever that they should have a bigger effect or even grant a free success. Here's my list:

Bribery: Suderham is a city of evil. As such, it uses hobgoblin mercenaries as city guards. Needless to say, the hobgoblins are willing to listen if the PCs offer them a sack of coins rather than a sword in the gut. For every 5 gp of bribe the PCs offer, they gain a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks. Note that a really rich party could offer a big enough bribe to guarantee an automatic success.

Combat: If the PCs blow a check and accrue a defeat, they can erase it by killing off whoever triggered the check before they can raise a general alarm. Of course, the PCs have to defeat their enemies before causing enough noise—say 5 or 6 rounds—to raise a general alarm. If the PCs fail to do that, they take another defeat for their troubles. This event is one I have to play by ear, but I think this will work fine at the table.

Time: Time heals all wounds, and the slave lords can't afford to keep the entire city on a high level of alert. Business would suffer, the guards would rebel at

How to Recover from a Boring Skill Challenge

You had a great idea for a skill challenge, but now the players are bored, they're rolling dice and giving only the most basic attempts at describing their actions, and they're fiddling with their dice and talking about everything but the game. It's time to win back their attention, and grinding through your skill challenge to its completion is never the answer. Here are some quick hints:

Pick a fight. If this is a social skill challenge, one of the NPCs draws a sword. Perhaps the PCs stumble across a dangerous critter, or vice versa. In the skill challenge from this article, a group of hobgoblin guards decide to rough up the PC and steal their equipment. Since the slave lords frown on such practice, the hobgoblins conveniently forget to report the fight if any of them escape.

Shake things up with new options. One of the root problems with flawed skill challenges is that they draw on skills that the characters are inept with, or your challenge calls for the same skills over and over again. Throw in a new factor that lets the PCs use more skills. In this article's example, the PCs find a hidden entrance to the sewers, allowing them to use Dungeoneering and History as primary skills.

End the challenge early, or save it for later. It's better to cut your losses. Let the story advance and declare the challenge over, or move on to another encounter and come back to the challenge. In the example skill challenge, the PCs might stumble across the villa they know they need to break into to find clues. The challenge of evading the guard fades into the background as the PCs deal with a new obstacle.

the additional hours (and perhaps demand more pay), and their trade partners might choose to avoid the city rather than deal with an armed camp. If the PCs go a day without suffering a defeat in the skill challenge, they lose one defeat.

When to Put Away the Dice

Sometimes, a player comes up with such a great idea that it feels wrong to force him to throw a die and accept the chance of failure. D&D is most enjoyable when the players have a sense that they can try anything. If you reward creativity, the players become more engaged with the game and start trying to come up with interesting ideas that take the game in a fun direction.

On the other hand, as a DM, it is important to stop well short of giving the players a blank check to try any dumb idea that comes into their heads. It's easy for a game to step over the line into farcical comedy or parody if harebrained schemes consistently work. As David St. Hubbins once said, there's a fine line between stupid and clever. Here are my personal rules for finding that line:

Would you feel guilty and lame for letting a clever idea fail? If so, then hand the PCs a free success.

When you put yourself in an NPC's shoes, or when you try to envision a plan working, do you see this idea more at home in *The Three Stooges*? Would a 5-year-old see through it? Then warn the players before slapping them with an automatic failure.

If neither of these extremes apply, use a bonus or penalty from 0 to 5 and go from there.

Next Month

You might have noticed that a couple of these ideas about skills and character actions point to a specific model for the skill challenge. I'll cover that in the next article, when I get to my fourth rule of design and talk about building the challenge's structure. The characters need to stay hidden over a long period of time, and the danger they face might rise and fall as the situation around them changes.

About the Author

Mike Mearls is the Lead Developer for the Dungeons & Dragons roleplaying game. His recent credits include *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell* and *Player's Handbook II* (v.3.5).

Meditations on Death

BY STEPHEN RADNEY-MACFARLAND

It must be that time of year. Here in the Seattle area, winter is just one big, long, dark gray blur. As far north as we are, the days get pretty darn short, and while it doesn't really get cold here (it rarely goes below freezing), the cloud cover is constant and you live under artificial light for months. It's really too much sometimes, and my mind wanders to topics as dark and gloomy as the weather. It's not long before I start getting a tad morbid and pondering the mysteries of death.

Don't worry; I'm not really getting all Goth on you. It's not really been so much the weather; I've been here long enough to get used to that. What really got me thinking was that letter last month asking if PC death was a forgone conclusion in 4th Edition, and the fact that on the very next week in my home game, I came within a hair of a TPK.

This part of Dungeons & Dragons is really a big shell game. As the DM, it's your job to create lethal obstacle courses for your players to traverse; combat puzzles that put push your players to the brink. But you also must be ready to pull them back. On a knife's edge at times, you have to create a balance between not letting your players think their characters are invincible while subtly but actively working to keep them alive.

If you spend your PCs' lives too cheaply, you'll have a hard time keeping your players invested in long running games and story. Each death creates a disconnect, and while a few can actually help a story, frequent deaths are another story. While killer games that chew PCs up and spit them out may be fun every once in a while (heck, they can be a blast), they are terrible for a good old-fashion *campaign*—those long running games where friends meet regularly for months and years, games players speak with awe and reverence for years after the campaign's big bad guy finally bit the dust. And having the ability to run a good campaign is one of the things that makes D&D better than any video game you could every play, and provides a style of play no computer can replicate, even in this day and age.

That said, appearing as if you are unwilling to let PCs die can also have negative effects. Without the risk of loss, the currency of victory is devalued. If players catch on that they are practically immortal, they may just start going through the motions, or worse still, lose interest. You see, in their heart of hearts, players want to be challenged. They want their characters to do heroic things. That's why they play D&D. And heroes always have powerful enemies; heroes always risk failure. Without risk, victory is just the conclusion of action.

The balancing act of character death is something that D&D has always struggled with. In the earliest editions, a low-level PC was so easily killed, players often rolled up quite a few characters to bring to sessions early in a new campaign. At one point, the game actually had rules for allowing your last character's possessions to move on to a relative (see page 13 of *Men & Magic* from the original D&D books, and the "Holmes" edition basic rules, page 8). Later editions provided the death's door rules, ratcheted up hit points, and provided more plentiful healing magic to increase character longevity. The newest edition of the game has gone the farthest, giving low-level characters a higher number of hit points and making healing quicker, part of a character role, but featuring limits (healing surges). But these rules solutions to character death can only get you so far. Despite the best rules precautions, if you run a game, you'll eventually have to deal with character death anyway. Here are three simple ways that you can save your own game when it comes to character death.

Communicate Expectations

Over the years, I've had plenty of conversations with D&D fans who absolutely hate Raise Dead and other ways to bring back characters. They just see these options as cheesy, or feel that they don't fit the tone of the game they want to run. I don't typically agree with their arguments, but I've also learned that there's no use trying to persuade them. When someone feels this passionately about such a sensitive topic, you're rarely going to change their mind, and some folks are *really* passionate about this subject.

If you're one of those DMs who doesn't use the core assumptions for death and dying, the first thing you absolutely need to do is *let your players know*. If the

Raise Dead ritual doesn't exist in your game, or you have to complete a major quest before you can get the local temple to even talk about the possibility of using one, explain that to your players up front. You don't have to be as blunt as sitting them down and explaining to them the facts of ... well ... death. You can have an NPC explain it in story terms. ("There are myths that great heroes can come back from the dead, but those are only stories, kid. Death is death. No cleric in the world can bring you back.") Alternatively, put it in your campaign handout. But make sure the players know your making this adjustment. Why? Because this knowledge will absolutely change the way they play their characters.

You might have the most story-savvy group in the world, with players who only perform actions based on their characters' knowledge, embracing their roles with the skill and intensity of a young Marlon Brando. But even Brando was aware of the basic assumptions of the world in which his character was intended to live. Every player has some attachment to his or her character, and the assumptions on death or dying will often (often somewhat subconsciously) trump the method roleplayer's steely focus on story and in-character knowledge. Plus, nothing brings out hurt feelings around the game table like a character who dies because the player didn't understand a game's assumptions about death.

Finally, if you deviate from the stated assumptions, always try to do so in favor of the PCs, not to their detriment, which brings me to...

Back Pocket Saves

One of the reasons I personally like liberal rules on death and dying is because I like options. When you're DMing, you absolutely need to be able to keep your options open and adapt at a moment's notice. When you run D&D, you lack the confines of a story writer (others control your main characters) or even a video game (characters can always just jump the level—they'll find ways to do so even when you stick them in a deep and dank dungeon for session after session). Letting players plan for death with a scroll of Raise Dead allows them to do some of that work. Trust me—they'll rarely see it as "cheesy" as you might. It's their characters; your players have a vested interest in their survival.

And like I said before, so do you. Watch movies, read comic books, examine plays, pay attention to that 80s TV show you're addicted to. Watch when a character dies or seems to die, and keep notes about how the story progresses without the character, as well as when and if the character comes back. Keep those ideas somewhere; it doesn't matter how you store them, but make a little PC death and story resurrection toolbox. Don't be afraid to borrow and use those ideas for your campaign.

Back in the day (and I'm dating myself here) we all got punched in the gut when Spock died saving the *Enterprise*. It was a powerful scene that makes *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* one of the greatest geek flicks ever. At the same time, we were all happy to see Spoke come back in the follow-up film. Why? Because Spock is awesome, and Star Trek fans had become so invested in him we were all willing to overlook a lot to accept his return. And don't get me started on comic book characters. Those characters die and come back with a frequency that would make a soap opera star blush. Now keep in mind that the strength of your players' investment to their characters has an intensity equal to if not greater than your attachment to your favorite movie or comic character. Examine how much you're willing to suspend your disbelief to accept the return of one of your favorite characters, and realize that your players will be willing to suspend just as much, if not more.

I have about half a dozen contingency plans ready to pull out in the case of a PC death. I structure each so I can use them in a variety of circumstances. They all have to do with the story of the game rather than the rules, and so far in my current campaign, I've had to pull out two of them. Eventually, I will run out, or not want to use them. But that's okay, because...

Sometimes You Have to Let 'em Die

No, I really mean it. Sometimes a character death serves the story and heroic feel of your game. Often these choices will be obvious. Sometimes a player in dire straits will sacrifice his or her character for the benefit of the group. And even though Gandalf comes back (is reborn, really) in the *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings*, it is often a more powerful story if a player has to choose between success for the group and their characters' final and ultimate death. That's heroics, baby!

Having a character die is also a good way to emphasize the real gravity of a threat. Sometimes, especially when the tactics of a group really start to gel, PCs will start to get a big head about the challenges they face. They demonstrate a "been there, done that attitude," and they need a jostle. Choosing not to pull your punches or using one of your back pocket saves can be a sobering experience for the players. It reminds them that their characters are more than just stats, healing surges, and hit points; they're part of a heroic tale where the consequences can be dire. Remember when Wash died in *Serenity*? That's exactly the kind of reaction I'm talking about.

This is especially true in final set-piece encounters. I have one player who regularly reminds me that not a single one of her characters has survived to the very end of one of my campaigns. Her characters end

up dying during the last session, in the midst of the grand finale encounter. That's because I really take the gloves off in those encounters, and I'm willing to throw my back pocket saves toolbox out the window. Heck, I do it in all the set-piece encounters—boss encounters that come at the end of a story arc. If you don't, there is little or no real risk, and your players will know it.

Well, I could talk about death all day, but we still have the mailbag to get to.

Mailbag

Musical Characters (and I don't mean bards)

One of my players is really p@$#ing me off. Every week he comes to the game with a new character idea and wants to ditch his old character for a new one. If I don't let him do it, all he does is complain until I let him change characters. I've had to go back to my story drawing board five times now because he's changed characters. With the release of the Martial Power *supplement, I am sure he'll come to the next game with a brand new character idea, and I don't even want to think about what will happen when* Player's Handbook 2 *comes out. What can I do to get him to stop wanting to switch characters?*

–Need-Help Ned

You can't do anything to get him to stop *wanting* to switch. You've got a player with character ADD. It's a hard situation you're in, especially if your player is younger, or at least not very mature. If you confine him to one character, he'll get bored and distracted. It sounds like you've already let him do it a couple times, so now he might feel like he's entitled. First, you should try to talk with him, and let him know how much this is frustrating you, and how hard it is to make plans. If this doesn't work, try using his proclivities to serve your game. Maybe instead of counting on him to play a constant character in your game, work with him to play important characters who fade in and out of the group depending on the campaign's current story arc. It allows him to play a variety of characters, and gives you the structure you need for your story.

'Tis the Season

Hi! The holidays are here and I want to give my DM something, but he buys all the books as soon as they come out and has buckets of miniatures. Do you have any gift ideas for DMs?

–Susan, who isn't Santa, but does play an elf!

Well, if your budget is tight, appreciation is always a pretty good gift. All DMs put a lot of effort into running their games, and I don't think they hear thank you near enough. Pitching in for a nice thank you dinner is a good inexpensive gift, as well.

One year, when I was right out of college, my players pitched in to pay the balance on a large dinning room table I had on layaway. I still game on the table, and its oak top has divots from the rolls of hundreds of d20s that have struck its surface over the years. Every time I sit at the table, I can't help but think about that group and their gift. My players got the idea from talking to my wife—if you really don't know what to get your DM, significant others are a good source of inspiration.

I hate to be total corporate stooge, but if your DM doesn't have a *D&D Insider* subscription, that would make a fantastic gift. Part of me thinks that every 4th Edition group out there should pitch in to get their DM a subscription. It's a great tool that no DM should be without, and that's not just my self interest speaking. I'm really channeling my inner geek here.

Of all the ideas, constant appreciation and respect is the best gift. I know from personal experience those are the two things a DM appreciates the most.

About the Author

Born on a stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration, the stars were definitely wrong when **Stephen Radney-MacFarland** came screaming into the world. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne're-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games.

Once that RPGA guy, Stephen is now a developer in RPG R&D where he doesn't create the traps... he just makes them deadlier. He also teaches a class on roleplaying design for the Art Institute of Seattle, molding the minds of young and upcoming designers. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

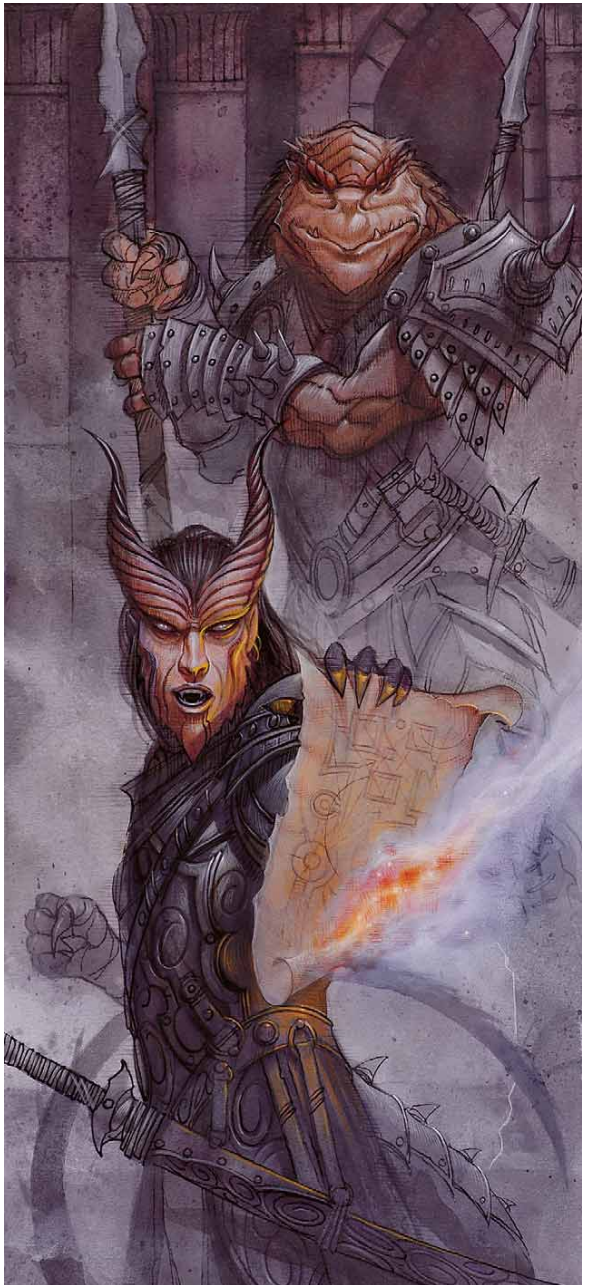
Clog Our Mailbox!

Your game needs saving, or you have some game saving advice of your own? Drop us a line at dndinsider@wizards.com with the worlds Save My Game as your subject line. Maybe next month we'll talk about your problem or feature some bit of advice that comes from the mailbag.

You can also join the game saving conversation on our message boards, but piping in on the discussion of DM tips and tricks. Stephen makes it a point to visit and chat with those who agree and disagree with him.

Creative Pillaging

BY JAMES WYATT
illustration by Wayne England



I'm going to be done with my novel (*Dragon War,* the third in my *Draconic Prophecies* trilogy) in just a couple of weeks, and I'm looking forward to having more time on my hands and more space in my brain to think about other things—like starting up this D&D campaign. In the meantime, I'm *joining* another campaign, which will be the fourth I'm playing in, this one run by awesome editor Jeremy Crawford. (My other DMs are Bill Slavicsek, Andy Collins, and Mike Mearls.)

So for right now, I'm learning a lot and getting inspiration by doing a lot of watching other DMs. One lesson that's been reinforced in my mind a couple of times recently is that nothing is off limits when it comes to finding inspiration for your game. Andy is running the Scales of War Adventure Path, but with some changes, and one of those changes hit us hard last session: He'd been watching *Band of Brothers* and wanted to see how a long fight where we had to hold a position against attacking gnolls would go. Mike, meanwhile, has been reading the recent reprint of the *Dragon Warriors* RPG (no relation to my novel *Dragon War*), and waxed eloquent in describing the rich fantasy of the introductory adventure, which involved an ancient curse with terrible consequences.

As I get to thinking about Greenbrier Chasm and the first adventures that will draw the characters into its depths, I realize that I'm going to need some help turning that into an adventure that will fill up the first three levels of the characters' adventuring careers. The dungeon map I took and modified way back in my second column is a start, but a small one—the map only gave me five small cavern regions, each with one or two encounters in it. That could cover 1st level, but I'm going to need more.

Fortunately, several low-level adventures have seen print (including electronic "print") since the launch of 4th Edition, and I have a number of resources I can draw on. Here's a quick list:

- Kobold Hall, in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*
- *Keep on the Shadowfell,* adventure H1
- Barrow of the Ogre King, and the rest of the adventure material in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*
- *Scepter Tower of Spellgard,* a Forgotten Realms adventure
- *Treasure at Talon Pass,* published for Free RPG Day last summer (and available on our website)
- *Into the Shadowhaunt,* the adventure produced for the D&D Game Day event last June [[If this is online, I can't find it—and maybe we ought to get it online!]]
- "Rescue at Rivenroar," the start of the *Scales of War* adventure path, in *Dungeon* #156
- "Siege of Bordrin's Watch," *Scales of War* part 2, in *Dungeon* #157 (for 3rd-level characters)

• "The Tariff of Relkingham," in *Dungeon* #158 (also for 3rd-level characters)

• "Menace of the Icy Spire," in *Dungeon* #159 (2nd-level characters)

• "The Necromancer's Apprentice," in *Dungeon Master 4th Edition for Dummies*

That was even longer than I thought it would be! I shouldn't have any trouble filling out material for three levels' worth of adventuring in Greenbrier Chasm with all this to draw on.

Some happily accept an addition to the party who carries gear, fawns subserviently, and mutters obscenities behind their backs, while others try to get rid of such characters as quickly as possible, one way or another.

The Shadow Haunt: The first thing I picked up and flipped through for ideas was *Into the Shadowhaunt*. That little adventure had an interesting element, sort of (but not quite) a skill challenge that framed the events of the adventure. The characters encounter a "shadow spirit" at the beginning of the adventure, and it makes recurring appearances after each encounter in the adventure. The characters can improve its attitude or make it hostile to them, depending on their actions and responses to it, and then the final encounter can be tipped one way or another when the spirit lends its help to one side or the other. I like that framework, and I can see using that for the characters' first foray into the chasm. It might not be an undead spirit—it could be a sort of nature spirit, wracked by the presence of so much unnatural energy in the area for so long and desperate for heroes to arise and start along their destiny to cleanse the land. And I think I would make it into an explicit skill challenge, giving the characters a variety of options for each interaction with the spirit.

Splug: *Keep on the Shadowfell* includes a goblin con artist held captive by his fellow goblins, a pathetic creature by the name of Splug. Different groups of players react very differently to colorful NPCs like this. Some happily accept an addition to the party who carries gear, fawns subserviently, and mutters obscenities behind their backs, while others try to get rid of such characters as quickly as possible, one way or another. The nice thing about Splug's appearance in the adventure is that the adventure leaves how to deal with Splug up to the DM's discretion: "Splug can provide comic relief, serve as a convenient porter and servant, or be a hidden threat who eventually betrays the party—whatever you think is best for the story." When I ran parts of the adventure for the D&D Podcast, I kept forgetting about Splug, so at the end of each encounter, the players would gripe about Splug's absence from the fighting. I had been thinking that eventually Splug would turn on the party, making a later encounter slightly more difficult. But in the end—when the entire party went down in the penultimate encounter—I decided that he had developed a touch of loyalty for the players, and he freed them to fight Kalarel in the last encounter.

I've been thinking that the chasm is full of aberrant monstrosities tainted by the presence of the Speaker in Dreams. So if I incorporate a Splug figure in the adventure, it's going to be some twisted, degenerate form of goblin—perhaps something like a dolgrim from Eberron. That might make it a little harder for the players to take Splug under their wings, as it were, but if it grovels sufficiently—through both its mouths—I suspect they'll let it live. And I'll let its role in the adventure play out as the story demands.

Consequences: One of the things *Keep on the Shadowfell* does particularly well is the way the consequences of the characters' actions are apparent whenever they return to Winterhaven. Each visit to Winterhaven leads to an interlude in the adventure. In Interlude Two, the people of the town are nervous and tense. In Interlude Three, they're on guard against an imminent undead attack. In each case, the characters get clear hints that their adventure matters to the people of the town, and that their failure would bring terrible consequences. I'll want to make sure to design similar interludes to make each trip back to Greenbrier from the chasm distinct, and to ensure that the characters know that their work is important to the village.

Competition: One of the key elements of the *Treasure of Talon Pass* adventure is that a group of orcs have entered the dungeon moments before the player characters do. That sets up an encounter later on, where one orc survivor lingers in a room where the PCs encounter some kobolds, which adds an interesting dynamic to the encounter. With a less linear dungeon map, I could actually structure that as a meaningful race, rather than just setting the orcs up as a road block on the single path through the dungeon. I don't see an obvious way to set that up on the characters' first foray into the chasm, but perhaps I can work it in on a later expedition. It works best as a race for a particular treasure (like the Jade Chalice in *Treasure of Talon Pass*), but the natural opponents in a competi-

tion like this would be the Kindred of the Shattered Gate.

The Rewards of Valor: One encounter in *Treasure of Talon Pass* includes an arena that imposes magical effects whenever a creature in it scores a critical hit, becomes bloodied, or is reduced to 0 hit points of fewer. These effects can turn the tide of battle or just be interesting twists of fate, but I think they're an interesting terrain effect for a climactic battle. I might steal just the table of effects, separate from the actual terrain and the rest of the encounter.

Rescue at Rivenroar: There's a lot of this first Scales of War adventure that I can lift pretty much whole cloth for my first adventures in and around Greenbrier. When the characters return from the rites of passage, some of the inhabitants of the chasm get riled up and attack the village and outlying farms. I can use the opening encounters from this adventure more or less as written for the raids on the village, changing only cosmetic details. I can also use the names and information about the captured townsfolk for captives the PCs must rescue from the dungeons in the chasm. I won't use the stolen treasures from the adventure, though, since they're tied to the specific goals and motivations of the raiders.

Kobolds and Lairs: Encounter A3 in *Keep on the Shadowfell* is the interior of the kobold lair. It's a tough encounter, and it can serve as a climactic encounter for part of the adventure. Best of all, it's on a map with a cave entrance that makes it easy to drop into the chasm. Some of the other kobold encounters, like On the Road: Kobold Brigands and encounter A1, could come in handy when the characters have left the chasm but the inhabitants of the chasm are striking out in retribution.

Lurking Choker: "The Necromancer's Apprentice" is a revision of the adventure that appeared in the original *Dungeon Master for Dummies*. When I revised it, I took what had been an encounter with a single monster—the choker in area 6—and included it with the previous encounter. Lurkers work great as add-ons to just about any encounter, lurking at the edge of the battle and watching for the opportunity to strike. If the characters defeat the orcs in that encounter, the choker flees, then comes back to follow the characters and attack them the next time they get in a fight. A choker would fit well in Greenbrier Chasm (even though they're not the aberrations they used to be), so I expect to steal that technique.

... monster design in 4th Edition is an art, and monsters have powers and abilities that make sense for them, because of their nature or their place in the world.

Creatures of the Chasm

It's clear from looking at the low-level adventures published so far (for every edition of D&D, ever) that the characters' first foray into Greenbrier Chasm is likely to involve a lot of kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, and kruthiks. (OK, so the kruthiks at least are new to 4th Edition D&D, except for the 3rd Edition *Miniatures Handbook*.) How do I make that fit with my story for the chasm? I want it full of warped and twisted monstrosities, not mundane humanoids.

Three easy answers: New monsters, cosmetic changes, and mechanical tweaks. Incidentally, these are the same techniques used in *The Gates of Firestorm Peak* to present horrible new threats to the characters—from disfigured duergar to troll mutates and Far Realm monstrosities such as the dharculus and the wyste.

New Monsters: I mentioned the dolgrim from Eberron. One Dolgrim, by the name of Ironteeth, appeared in the Eberron adaptation of *Keep on the Shadowfell* in *Dungeon* #155 (you can also find him in the D&D Compendium). As a level 3 monster, it makes a fine addition to the caves of Greenbrier Chasm. Similarly, the dolgaunt warriors in the same article are great low-level aberrant monsters for my dungeon.

The Compendium also points me to the level 4 and 5 carrion crawlers (from the Living Forgotten Realms adventure "Flames of Initiation") and the Wyrmwarped Atrocity from *Draconomicon*, a kobold warped into a level 4 brute. I might also consider using the dew frond from the "Hazards of Dark Sun" article in *Dragon* #364, to represent the Depravation, the corruption of nature in and around the chasm.

Cosmetic Changes: On one level, it's easy to change the appearance of a monster and make it look like something unfamiliar. I might be looking at a kobold stat block in an adventure, but the creature in front of the characters might not be recognizable as a kobold. On another level, though, it's not quite as simple as it seems.

First is the issue of miniatures. When I ran my *Gamma World* game a couple of months ago, it was easy to adapt existing monsters to fit the Dreamblade minis I wanted to use (see Episode 7). But if I want to fill Greenbrier Chasm with hideous tentacled monstrosities that look nothing like mundane kobolds and goblins, that's much less effective if the miniatures I throw down on the table look exactly like the mundane critters I started with.

Second, monster design in 4th Edition is an art, and monsters have powers and abilities that make sense for them, because of their nature or their place in the world. All kobolds have the *shifty* power, which lets them shift 1 square as a minor action. All goblins have *goblin tactics*, which lets them shift as an immediate reaction when an attack misses them. If I use both goblin and kobold statistics and apply them to an undifferentiated population of tentacled monstrosities, I'm losing part of what makes those monsters unique and distinct from each other.

When I do go with cosmetic changes, I'm going to maintain distinct groups of warped and mutated kobolds, goblins, kruthiks, and whatever else I need to modify. I'll change their appearance, but keep them recognizable as having once been kobolds or whatever. I think that might actually make them more horrifying to the players, and it lets me use my existing miniatures.

Mechanical Tweaks: I'd like my warped and corrupted monsters to have a few surprises up their sleeves in terms of what they can do in combat. Unlike many groups of monsters, the foulspawn in the *Monster Manual* (the monsters to which I most want to link my new creations) have no abilities in common. However, there are abilities I can borrow for lower-level monsters of similar roles. For example:

Warped Goblin Mindwrecker Level 3 Controller (Leader)
As goblin hexer, but replace hexer rod, blinding hex, and stinging hex with these powers from the foulspawn grue:
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+7 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is dazed instead (save ends).
↛ **Mind Worm** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes a –2 penalty to its Will defense and is slowed (save ends both).
↛ **Whispers of Madness** (standard; recharge y z) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 5; deafened creatures are immune; +7 vs. Will; 3d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is dazed instead (save ends).

Kobold Warp-Priest Level 3 Artillery (Leader)
As kobold wyrmpriest, but replace energy orb and dragon breath with these powers from the foulspawn seer:
↛ **Warp Orb** (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
↛ **Distortion Blast** (standard; daily)
Close blast 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Aberrant creatures take half damage.

Kruthik Foul Hulk Level 4 Brute
As kruthik adult, but replace the following statistics with these new statistics, inspired by the foulspawn hulk:
Fortitude 15 (17 while bloodied)
Immune fear
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC (or +10 while bloodied); 1d10 + 3 damage, or 2d10 + 5 while bloodied.

Armed with this kind of tweak to existing monsters, I am prepared to loot and pillage any source material I can find to flesh out my campaign arc into full-fledged adventures for my hapless player characters.

Just as soon as I get this novel finished and actually get a group of players together . . .

About the Author

James Wyatt is the Design Manager for D&D and one of the lead designers of D&D 4th Edition. In over seven years at Wizards of the Coast, he has authored or co-authored award-winning adventures and settings including the *Eberron® Campaign Setting*, *City of the Spider Queen*™, and **Oriental Adventures**®. Recent works include *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*™, *Cormyr: The Tearing of the Weave*™, and *The Forge of War*™. Most recently, he was the author of the 4th Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*®.